

PERCEPTIONS OF THE REFORM AGENDA FROM SELECTED  
SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE KEYSTONE AREA EDUCATION  
AGENCY I OF THE STATE OF IOWA

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by P. Allen Whitlatch  
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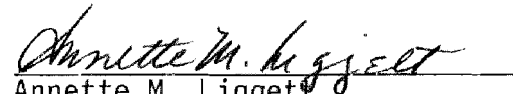
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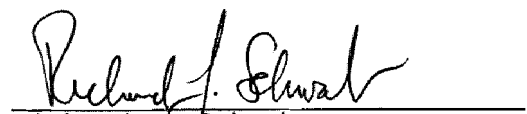
May 1997

Approved by Committee:

  
Edward R. Ducharme, Chair

  
Annette M. Liggett

  
James Cox

  
Richard L. Schwab  
Dean of the School of Education

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An abstract of a Dissertation by  
P. Allen Whitlatch  
May 1997  
Drake University  
Advisor: Edward R. Ducharme

The problem. Beginning with the Nation at Risk report, there has been a continuous stream of public recommendations, national and state goals, business initiatives, and local efforts to reform America's public schools. Although educational change appears simple from the perspective of the popular press, reform (transformation, restructuring, or improvement) of schools is a complex and time consuming task.

Iowa's 379 school districts are at different stages in the process of reform and have embraced different reform initiatives. Little data presently exist to show where Iowa schools are in the reform process. To properly assess the current state of affairs and to provide data usable at the practitioner level, it was necessary to limit the size of the group studied.

Procedures. I developed and used a survey instrument and interview protocol to determine what Iowa school superintendents perceived as the status of reform (transformation, restructuring, improvement) efforts (perceived state of implementation) in Northeast Iowa. The survey and interview protocol included the four broad categories and the 24 subcategories of transformation identified by superintendents in a 1993 survey conducted by the Keystone AEA. I followed a qualitative methodology. I recorded the perceptions (views, opinions) of informed professional educators.

Findings. I reviewed, analyzed, and recorded the data derived from the written surveys and the 10 on-site interviews. The resulting narratives provide a summarized compilation of the perceived state of school reform in the 22 responding districts.

The most significant individual in the implementation of the various school reforms in Northeast Iowa is the superintendent. The superintendent has control of the financial and human resources that are available and, with small exceptions, was the person responsible for school reform activities.

The Area Education Agency is the one single factor that surfaces in the drive to implement school reform activities in Northeast Iowa. All superintendents rely on the expertise and assistance from the AEA.

Conclusions. The results of this study support the conclusion that schools in Northeast Iowa are actively involved in transformation activities. The individual superintendent determines the emphasis on reform activities in any given school district.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

To some, the current wave of school reform is merely another educational trend, a continuation of the ever-present debate about schools and schooling (Tye, 1992). Yet school reform is a matter of strategic importance for the United States and Iowa, a shifting from the broad human development issues traditionally addressed by education to making schools the tool for making the American economy ascendant in the world again. Vollmer (1991), Director of Operations for the Iowa Business and Education Roundtable, describes it in this way,

High quality education is Iowa's most important product. It is true that for most of the last 150 years corn and beans and livestock have driven our economy and have been the source of our prosperity. Not any more. Our future depends more and more on the product of the classrooms than the harvest of the fields. But our present schools, although the best in the nation, are not now producing the graduates we need. (p. 4A)

Because schools are not producing the kind of graduates needed by today's employers (Cuban, 1990), the reform of the organization is necessary.

What is meant by reform? Transformation or restructuring, as it is often referred to, in its simplest form is change. Kanter (1985) states that change and the need to manage it has always been present. Even though change is common, many may not like it nor may the consumers of the product. Kanter (1985) gives 10 common reasons people resist change: (1) Loss of Control, (2) Excess Uncertainty, (3) Surprise, Surprise, (4) The Difference Effect, (5) Loss of Face, (6) Concerns About Future

Competence, (7) Ripple Effects, (8) More Work, (10) Sometimes the Threat is Real. Resistance to change is not irrational; it stems from good and understandable concerns. Managers who can analyze the sources of resistance are in the best position to invent the solutions to it, to manage change effectively and smoothly. There may be no skill more important for the challenging times ahead.

School transformation and school restructuring are used to label much of the reform efforts in the public schools in the United States today. Some of the roots lie in the 1983 government report, A Nation at Risk: The imperative for Education reform. The report, which set alarm bells jangling as Asayesh (1993) states, called for sweeping changes in America's schools, generating continuous debate over how schools should be reformed. Asayesh argues that the oversimplification of the report was an asset; that it was more a political document than an educational tract gave the report its "punch."

Principals and superintendents were urged to act as leaders and bring the community around to a consensus with the various recommendations of the commission. Nash and Ducharme (1983) view the report as gloomy, suffering from a lack of joy. It might, they conclude, produce a nation of technical literates, merely eating and drinking from a bigger and richer trough.

Sizer (cited in Asayesh, 1993) called it "punchy, focused, and alarmist"; just what the times called for. Goodlad (cited in Asayesh, 1993) saw the focus shifting back to schools rather than on parents as had been the case the previous decade.

Following Nation at Risk was America 2000: An Education Strategy, promulgated by President George Bush in 1991, and the nation's governors. Described as a long-term strategy, it began a five-year crusade to move the nation toward the six broad education goals adopted in 1990.

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90%.
3. American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
4. U.S. Students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

Reaction to this document has been mixed; it has generated a great deal of debate. The William T. Grant Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship published a series of commentaries on this new initiative in which Chubb (1991, p. 2) describes the America 2000 Plan as "the most encouraging education proposals to emerge from the federal government in a very long time." He contends that the proposal contained a recognition of the fact that schools are confused about their objectives.

The rejection by America 2000 of the traditional federal focus of new legislation and special programs is viewed as positive, because it



will not rely on the short-term cooperation of Congress and the President (Chubb, 1991). It will instead require long-term cooperation of state and local officials who ultimately will be responsible for restructuring. Chubb sees the process as taking bottom up style reform and bringing it from the top down. This approach takes the process of reform to the people closest to the problem: teachers, principals, parents, and other ordinary members of the community.

"The President and his advisors need to reexamine the landscape. They seem to be looking across educational and social terrain that is different from that of which others see" (Tirozzi, 1991, p. 9). Tirozzi says that his initial enthusiasm for America 2000 has dimmed as time has allowed for thoughtful reflection. He finds the sections on school choice troubling as a potential funnel for directing public dollars to private schools (Tirozzi, 1991).

The reform of urban education systems would be the first priority, focusing on a broad-based plan to raise achievement and affect low achievement and racial isolation. The reform must also include a focus on high quality teachers for all children, something only vaguely hinted at in America 2000 (Tirozzi, 1991).

Wise (1991) focuses on the issue of teacher accountability, declaring that the commitment to develop well prepared teachers is missing from America 2000. He believes manipulating curriculum and school organization will not be enough. By the year 2000, one million teachers will be added to the teaching force in the United States. Clearly a powerful way to affect the nation's schools and student learning would be to affect the preparation of new teachers (Wise,

1991). The predicted shortage has led to a call for alternatives to traditional teacher preparation programs. The call for alternative paths of certification must not, however, be allowed to reduce standards for teachers (Wise, 1991). Knowledge and competence in one's subject matter are necessary, but are not sufficient to ensure good teaching.

Pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of child and adolescent development, of motivation, learning theory, individual differences, and classroom management are also very necessary (Wise, 1991). There is wide variation from state to state as to standards for certification and those standards actually fluctuate with supply and demand. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards for certification are required by only three states (Wise, 1991). He believes the national standard should be required for graduation and should be coupled with performance evaluation measures to determine a teacher's competence.

Lewis (1991), also a part of the W. T. Grant Project, concentrates on the New American Student. America 2000 denies and ignores the cultural and population diversity present in the United States today. It is a piecemeal solution to barriers confronting the nation's youth. Two major reasons for the faltering public education system are not even addressed in America 2000 (Lewis, 1991). The first is the way the education of children and youth is financed. The heavy reliance on the property tax, a tax subject to much volatility due to local and regional economic swings and swings in local mood, does not provide sufficient stability and certainly not equity. The whole issue of financing is

never explored, rather "we flail around with ideas to plug the holes" (Lewis, 1991, p. 34).

The other is the vision portrayed by America 2000 no longer exists and the current proposals from congress are far removed from reality of who is teaching and who is being taught. Merely tacking on tougher standards provides no adjustment for the changes in student populations from former years.

The report calls attention to the importance of American schools (Meade, 1991) but is deficient in addressing matters of at-risk children and educational equity. The proposed strategy does not deal straightforwardly with those issues. The goal of "all children in America will start school ready to learn," alludes to at-risk youth, but offers no specifics. The early childhood intervention programs and related activities requires funding an coordination of efforts.

Meade (1991) viewed neglecting to mention ongoing effective current initiatives as a significant weakness, i.e., starting new schools while not supporting current schools. Even the strategy of "new" schools is hardly new, the Experimental Schools Program from the 1970s, was concerned with "new" schools.

On the whole, former President Bush's strategy pays little attention to the lessons learned from past reform efforts (Meade, 1991). The reform of the nation's schools need not start with a clean slate; much can be learned from the lessons of the past, but America 2000 largely ignores this premise.

## Statement of the Problem

There is a growing evidence that America's schools are no longer the best in the world, (though long perceived by the American public as the best) as measured by a number of indicators used by state and national leaders (Vollmer, 1991). The agrarian society and the later urban industrial age that produced the present system of schooling exists only in vestigial form, yet much of the nation clings to those models. Today, a technological, service, information-based global economy prevails (Packer, 1992). Workers expend mental effort to use ideas and symbols.

Schools are presently in a position similar to railroads in the first third of this century. Railroads had become a second-rate mode of transportation because their managers thought their business was running a railroad rather than providing a competitive and viable mode of transportation. Public schools, in turn, run the risk of becoming a second-rate education option if school executives persist in thinking that they are in the business of operating a school, rather than having an educated employable citizen as the end product (O'Neil, 1992). This is evidenced by the amount of time administrators and boards of education devote to managerial activities.

Iowa has traditionally enjoyed the position of having and being recognized externally as having the best schools in the nation (Iowa Department of Education 1991, 1994). While this position has not changed dramatically, a growing perception exists among lay educational leaders and education professionals that Iowa schools are not providing learners with the tools to be successful in their work in the 21st century. Are

Iowa schools structured in a fashion appropriate for citizens whose productive work life will be in the 21st century?

Most Iowans perceive little connection between the quality of their lives and supporting high quality education (Vollmer, 1991). This is especially true if support means raising taxes. If Iowa schools continue to produce only low-skill graduates, the industries attracted will be low paying, as low skills equate to low pay (Vollmer, 1991). This is already happening with industries locating in rural Iowa. Rural Iowa could soon decline to Third World status and all of Iowa will suffer if this becomes a dominant trend.

Strategies must be developed that are unified and not haphazard in the implementation of transformation in Iowa. There are 379 school districts in Iowa but there should not be 379 plans for implementation of the elements of transformation. Doing so would be contrary to the current efforts of the Iowa Legislature and the Iowa Department of Education to have Iowa schools meet uniform standards. The emphasis by the Iowa Department of Education has been toward a national and global outlook. There must be a central force guiding the overall restructuring plan that will allow for individual local differences, but not allow those local differences to subvert the goals of the restructuring plan as adopted by the legislature or Department of Education.

The role of the state is to provide leadership and coordination of the system that provides early childhood, elementary, secondary, and community college education (Iowa Department of Education, 1994). The state board initiated the planning process in 1991, using a collaborative decision-making process that involved many Iowans and in

March 1994, adopted and issued Education Is Iowa's Future: The State Plan For Educational Excellence (Iowa Department of Education, 1994).

This plan is an update of the original 1991 plan and retains the four major goals of The State Plan For Educational Excellence. The objective and strategies are grouped as applicable to both elementary/secondary and community college education (Iowa Department of Education, 1994).

The board adopted nine principles as a set of general guidelines to guide school reform efforts in Iowa (see Appendix A).

The strong direction from the Iowa Department of education is beginning to bear fruit in local schools. Iowa is made up of 379 local school districts and 15 Area Educational Agencies (AEA). The 25 district Keystone AEA in Northeast Iowa has (Holland, 1993b) identified four strands of school reform and a number of sub-strands that are actively being implemented in Keystone schools. These strands will provide the local school officials with a uniform framework as they seek to meet the overall goals of the Department of Education. Those identified strands and sub-strands (Holland, 1993b) are listed in Appendix B.

Little evidence exists as to what extent Iowa local education authorities (lay and professional) perceive which reform initiatives are being implemented in their district and the degree of implementation. It seemed apparent that a system in place relatively unchanged since the 1930s would be inappropriate for entering the world of work in 1997, let alone 2009, the year in which kindergartners of 1996 will enter the work force (Stemmer, Brown, & Smith, 1992).

In this study, I determined thorough surveys and selected interviews the perceived state of school reform in schools in the 25 local school districts comprising the Keystone Area Education Agency I in Northeast Iowa and established baseline data useful to Iowa school boards, administrators, and other educators. I address:

What perceptions do school superintendents express on the school reform agenda (transformation, restructuring, and improvement) as occurring in their school district?

### **Assumptions of The Study**

I use the following assumptions in this study.

1. The school superintendents surveyed will be knowledgeable about the state of reform in their districts.
2. The respondents of the study will understand the questions and will answer them honestly and candidly.

## **Chapter 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The reform of American education involves taking a school system that has operated for over a century on a Prussian military model adapted for an agrarian calendar and changing that system to produce graduates capable of economic competition in a global economy (Daggett, 1991). According to Daggett (1984), the nation must transform its schools if youth are to thrive in the information age. The path to a world class economy, a vital democracy, and individual fulfillment will be started by the process called school transformation. Unless the average American citizen accepts the need for change and helps educators transform American education, the American way of life may vanish (Magaziner & Clinton, 1992).

Singapore, Taiwan, and Korea have gone from rundown third world nations to premier exporters, and Japan and Germany have become economic Juggernauts. The United States has become the world's largest debtor (Magaziner & Clinton, 1992). The nation must work more productively and become more competitive; the American work force must change (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1991; Stemmer et al., 1992).

To effect such change, a number of writers have suggested the need for organizations, particularly schools, to be re-structured. Senge (1990) and Blietz (1990) call for the creating of a learning organization. What is a learning organization? Senge goes beyond mere



collecting of information. He believes it is more about creating and building something, enhancing capacity. Organizations operating in an active manner that continuously enhance capacity in a state of learning are learning organizations (Senge, 1990).

The new organization (Senge, 1990) will be founded on a commitment to five basic disciplines: building shared vision, personal mastery, mental models, team learning, and systems thinking; defined as theory translated into a set of practices. The new organization may never master all of the disciplines, but it will create the skills and tools necessary for enhancing its capacities.

Senge (1990) views the world today as turbulent and sees organizations with many layers of hierarchy not adapting quickly and having great potential for disappearing. Learning, as it has come to be used, means taking in information, rather than adapting and responding to change.

Traditional authoritarian organizations tend to destroy people's spirit and change only when the organization is forced to change. Organizations accepting the five disciplines will become predominantly learning oriented rather than controlling (Senge, 1990).

School leaders need to look at new ways of thinking and understand the learning disabilities that afflict most contemporary organizations (Senge, 1990). Old paradigms, which Senge calls learning disabilities, must be shed and discarded. He cites what he believes are six disabilities that set the stage for introduction of the five basic disciplines: (a) I am my position, (b) The enemy is out there, (c) The myth of proactiveness, (d) The parable of the boiled frog, (e) The

illusion of learning from experience, and (f) The myth of the management team (Senge, 1990). Briefly described, the disciplines are as follows:

- The first discipline is that of building shared vision. The idea of shared vision is a process that is never quite complete. It is not something that can be done and over with. Too many managers do not recognize that vision is their work. Few corporations have a real view of what commitment must be made to individuals for genuinely shared vision to work.
- The second discipline, personal mastery, elaborates on that commitment and posits that individuals must have a personal vision before a shared vision can exist. People must have their own sense of what matters to them or else they are merely following someone else's vision. Personal mastery involves not only vision, but also having accurate grasp of reality, thus generating creative tension.
- One's vision of current reality has much to do with the third discipline, mental models. This is because people use internal pictures to interpret and make sense out of the world. There exists within this discipline a need to balance inquiry and advocacy.
- The fourth discipline is team learning. The mental models that matter are shared mental models with the implicit assumption that this is the way the world is. Individual learning is irrelevant to organizations because all important decisions are made in groups. Team learning result from dialogue more than from discussion

which are two vastly different concepts. Collective learning rarely occurs without the enrichment of dialogue.

- The Fifth Discipline is Systems Thinking, the one that ties all the others together. Systems Thinking is vital to learning organizations because it offers a critical set of tools for understanding policy and strategy issues. Much lip service is given to the growing complexity of the world and the accelerating rate of change, but little attention has been given to ways of thinking that will be necessary to understand and manage in a world of increasing interdependency (Senge, 1990.)

System thinking helps people see how their actions have shaped current reality, thus giving them the confidence that they can create a different reality in the future (Senge, 1990). Without systems thinking, such visions are at best wishful thinking and the seeds of cynicism at worst. Systems thinking provides critical linkages to the other disciplines, illuminating the subtleties of personal mastery. It is vital to the practice of working with mental models, providing the tools that help surface hidden assumptions. Thus models may be constructed focused on interrelationships rather than static images (Senge, 1990).

Dialogue, the cornerstone of team learning, arises from a systemic world view. Through this linkage the subtle connectedness in thought patterns are illuminated. System Thinking integrates the disciplines (Senge, 1990).

Building on Senge's concepts, Daggett calls for a complete restructuring of American schools. Daggett (1991) provides a particularly insightful message concerning school transformation. The

current practice of using advisory committees to guide schools has resulted in schools and communities trying to re-create the schools of committee members' youth. America does not need a 1950's curriculum because the skills needed in the work place of tomorrow will be very different from those needed in 1950 (Daggett, 1991). There has been little change in the American school curriculum from the schools of the 1930s. Schools should not be preparing students to go to work in the industrial society of the past (Daggett, 1991). The American economy has shifted from an industrial base to an information and service orientation (Daggett & Stevens, 1989). As previously noted, in the last 10 years the United States has changed from the world's largest creditor nation to the largest debtor nation (Magaziner & Clinton, 1992). The implications for educating young people to live in such a world are enormous; as incomes of middle class Americans decline from the global competition and the nation's debt load, those same middle class members are becoming more and more concerned about their children's future and very demanding for quality education (AASA, 1991). Daggett (1991) believes that change and transformation must come about in order for the nation to prosper.

Sergiovanni (1992) approaches the problem of systemic change from a leadership perspective. He wants to build a theory of school leadership based on moral authority. To establish the practice of such a theory requires the expansion of a school's value structure and authority basis for school leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992). He calls for an expansion of the values generally believed to be legitimate in school management such as secular authority, science, and deductive logic. He

argues that sense experience, intuition, sacred authority, and emotion are as legitimate as secular authority, science, and deductive logic, the three values that he believes now dominate management thought (Sergiovanni, 1992).

The use of material incentives and psychological rewards assumes that self-interest is the basis for all motivation. Sergiovanni (1992) says there is overwhelming evidence that other ideas and ideals motivate teachers and principals. American schools now rely almost exclusively on bureaucratic authority, psychological authority, and technical-rational authority. Though important as those sources may be, he asserts they are not as powerful as moral authority as a basis for school leadership practice.

Sergiovanni (1992) maintains that the more schools are able to integrate substitute models of leadership into the school, then teachers and others will be become self-managed. He discusses as substitutes the norms that emerge.

- when schools are transformed from organizations into learning communities.
- when professionalism is viewed not only as a statement of competence but also as a virtue.

Sergiovanni examines the importance of collegiality in building a morally responsive school community. Collegiality is more than just something to do with warm interpersonal relationships or school arrangements that force teachers to work together (Sergiovanni, 1992). He believes that collegiality in its best form comes from within as teachers feel the necessity of and the responsibility for sharing and working together. Collegiality is a form of professional virtue.

He discusses the virtuous school and reprises the themes of expanding management values and sources of authority for leadership, building followership, and understanding collegiality as a professional virtue (Sergiovanni, 1992). With morally responsive leadership, principals and teachers will become stewards and servants (Sergiovanni 1992). There is still a place for command leadership, but the heart of one's leadership practice is to become the embodiment of one's ministerial roles. Building a covenant of shared values; empowerment, concern with duties and obligations as well as with discretion; collegiality, understood as a form of professional virtue; leadership by outrage; kindling outrage in others--these are principles of leadership he proposes.

Sergiovanni (1992) believes that expanding the value structure of and authority bases for leadership can bring to leadership practice a set of powerful ideas for influencing what and how people think and feel.

Sizer (1992) presents his plan for designing American secondary education in a manner that preserves the best of tradition, but accepts the premise that schools must be redesigned to meet the needs of students in the future, both for their own sake and that of the nation. Sizer (1992) devises a composite American secondary school where a committee composed of teachers, students, administrators, and parents plan for the redesign of the American high school. Probably the greatest challenge faced by teachers is that most of the elements of the school are not subject to teacher control. Despite earlier reform efforts, little has changed. Reforms have not been successful because they have

been mandated from afar and because of any community's diversity, top down mandated produce differing results (Sizer, 1992). Sizer believes that real reform comes from the bottom up, especially from teachers. Sizer believes the reforms of the 1980s did not address: (a) new research on why American students lag behind international peers, (b) changing the traditional bureaucracy of public education, and (c) the real world inside schools. Thus schools were misdirected.

Reforms of the nineties show more promise, he believes, but few address the fact that school itself must be rethought and redesigned (Sizer, 1992). The success of school reform is dependent on personal concerns of individuals, from parents' concerns, not from A Nation at Risk. A process that is slowly getting underway in a number of American communities where the quality and nature of schools is being questioned (Sizer, 1992).

The committee in Sizer's restructured school discusses how kids differ in how and at what rates they learn. It is a long standing assertion in schools that they respond to the differing needs of students. Sizer (1992) believes that this is generally the case. Existing policies do not allow teachers to get to know their students well, understand how their minds work, what pressures they feel, and what they do not like to do (Sizer, 1992). The community a school serves is important and the school must recognize this and also capitalize on it (Sizer, 1992).

The school should become a place with a sense of community where there is respect for one another (Sizer, 1992). A community believing itself in charge of its schools will be supportive of those schools.

Schools must be organized to nurture good habits. Teachers must find ways of engaging students in ways to get them to work hard. They must become workers to learn. They must use knowledge, not merely display knowledge. Schools should be units that are small enough to be communities of friends which would encourage staff and students to share work and reflect on their goals and practices (Sizer, 1992).

Changing how schools are structured will not be an easy task (Schlechy, 1990). Values, belief systems, roles, and relationships must all be re-examined. School restructuring emerges from the fundamental problem that schools are not preparing students to function in a world of ideas, as opposed to a world of industrial employment. They must become lifelong learners, able to think critically and creatively in an information based society (Schlechy, 1990).

For schools to meet these challenges, there must be strong school leaders with a sense of direction where they are going, where they want others to go, and how they are going to reach that destination. This will require dedication and persistence in the face of those who would resist (Schlechy, 1990).

The fundamental purposes of schools have changed from one of promoting republican/Protestant morality, work and civic ethics to the production of knowledge, a change due to major shifts in the character of the American culture (Schlechy, 1990).

Leadership and the manner of governance of schools must undergo major changes. Authority systems will be altered; the symbols of authority will be rearranged; and the reward system will be changed (Schlechy, 1990). School boards have a responsibility to provide an



atmosphere that will foster new thought and allow for new ways of action. In a historical perspective, the needs of the past have shaped the present structure. School leaders' concept of the purpose of the organization will shape the vision of the organization and its structure (Schlechy, 1990).

Today, a technological, service, information-based global economy prevails. Workers expend mental effort to use ideas and symbols. In this setting, students are knowledge workers, teachers are leaders, the curriculum is the raw materials, and principals are the leaders of leaders (Schlechy, 1990). Teachers will become guides to information, not merely sources of information. Students will produce knowledge, not be merely passive receivers (Schlechy, 1990).

American workers will acquire new skills and attitudes to function well in groups, exercise self discipline, exhibit loyalty while maintaining critical faculties, and respect others' rights (Schlechy, 1990). Workers must master the basic skills and be able to create knowledge, invent, and solve problems (Schlechy, 1990).

In the restructured school the teachers are both inventors and leaders. Top leaders (superintendents) and middle managers (principals) function as leaders of leaders, the creators of the conditions in which other leaders thrive. The fundamental tasks of leadership are the creation and articulation of a vision (Schlechy, 1990). The key task of schools for the next century is to create a vision consistent with the new purpose of schools. For implementation of these concepts participatory leadership is requisite. Teachers must be empowered to act as leaders with the needs of students central to the purpose of

education (Schlechy, 1990). Principals must be leaders of leaders and superintendents like CEOs in well-run businesses; they must see themselves as head teachers as well as chief managers (Schlechy, 1990).

There must be a new flexibility in schools. The resources of people, knowledge, and time and space must be allocated so as to achieve optimal results. Anything in the way of flexibility must be seen as a candidate for restructuring (Schlechy, 1990).

Elmore (1990) believes motives driving school restructuring fall into three major categories: economics, equity, and an emerging crisis in the quality of the teaching force. Collectively these are a significant platform for the restructuring of the nations schools.

According to Elmore (1990), political debate on school restructuring focuses on three major themes: empowerment, accountability, and academic content. School restructuring is concerned with: empowering teachers, parents, and students to play a larger role in the nature and substance of schools, holding schools accountable for results produced, and orienting schools and those who work in them towards engagement in academic learning.

Elmore (1990) presents the discussion on school restructuring within the context of three purposes: to focus on teaching subject matter in way that promote higher order thinking, to empower those who work in the schools and the school itself, to ensure accountability for educators and their clients.

In turn, the focus for reform has been in three areas of restructuring: changes in how teaching and learning occur, changes in

educators occupational situation, and changes in how power is distributed (Elmore, 1990).

Teachers are often at the center of the debate concerning America's schools. They are both singled out for much of the criticism of what is wrong with schools and seen as the key to the reform of schools. Thus the preparation of continuing and future teachers is important if schools are to address the quality of the professional staff. Veteran staff will need to acquire new skills to meet the needs of 21st century learners. Additionally, if, as Wise (1991) contends, one million new teachers will join America's teaching force by 2000, new approaches to teacher preparation are necessary.

The Holmes Group is a consortium formed in 1986 of 100 American research universities. Its purpose is to enhance the quality of schooling through (a) research and development and (b) the preparation of career professionals in teaching (Holmes Group, 1986). The group developed five major goals comprising improvements to universities and schools. There must be collaboration between the universities, local schools, teacher organizations, and state and local governments for there to be improvement in the teaching profession.

The five Goals are:

- Make the profession of teaching intellectually sound.
- Recognize differences in teachers' knowledge, skill, and commitment, and in their education, certification, and work.
- Create standards of entry to the profession -- examinations and educational requirements that are professionally relevant and intellectually defensible.
- Connect universities with schools.
- Make schools better places for teachers to teach and learn.

For many years the profession has been underpaid and overworked (Holmes Group, 1990). There has been criticism of a lack of academic rigor in teacher education programs.

Social and intellectual demands have escalated for teachers, but the nature and organization of their work has changed very little (Holmes Group, 1990). The job description has changed very little since the mid-1800s, with most professional time spent teaching classes and little on preparation or evaluation, or interaction with other adult professionals. A need to change teacher roles and assignments as many present roles are demeaning (Holmes Group, 1990).

They believe a three-tier system of teacher licensing with an array of teaching roles/assignments would alleviate this situation and would accomplish the following (Holmes Group, 1986).

- allow for only well-educated teachers;
- recognize differences in competence, commitment, and responsibility;
- create room for professional achievement and advancement within the profession;
- provide incentives for a constructive profession consisting of learning, serious inquiry, and helping others improve;
- provide some occupational mobility and choice;
- make it possible for communities to respond to disequilibrium in supply and demand for teachers;
- provide opportunities to accomplish a number of vital institutional goals;
- make room for top practitioners who can lead their field to improvements; and
- enhance professional schools of education.

In addition to developing new measures of professional competence, changes in education departments at universities will be necessary. The undergraduate education major should be abolished, an argument that teachers should only teach subjects they know well (Holmes Group, 1986). The undergraduate degree, particularly for elementary teachers, does not provide teachers the opportunity to study any subject in depth (Holmes Group, 1990).

In 1990 the Holmes Group published a comprehensive report dealing with school structure and organization calling for the establishment of Professional Development Schools. Such schools are not intended to be lab schools connected to research universities, but rather to be a new institution: a public elementary and secondary school that (a) helps develop the novice professionals, (b) continues the development of experienced professionals, and (c) contributes to the research and development of the teaching profession.

Professional Development Schools can be seen as one piece of the broader agenda for educational reform. Professional Development Schools would try to institutionalize the development of new knowledge and practice. Schools for the next century should: help children take an active role rather than a passive one and build on students' own culture. Schools must assist students in becoming critical of popular culture and to build bridges between traditional academia and the culture of students and the world (Holmes Group, 1990).

The learning community, similar to Senge's Learning Organization, will become the heart of any effort directed to teaching for understanding, meaning here the concept of lifelong learning (Holmes

Group, 1990). Key activities that constitute teaching for understanding are conversation, criticism, engagement, voice, participation and purpose (Holmes Group, 1990). The well-rounded development of all citizens is important for the future economic, political, and cultural progress of this nation (Holmes Group, 1990). Education will play a major role in equipping people for jobs and in educating them for their role in a modern democracy (Holmes Group, 1990).

Professional Development Schools will be models of learning communities, the bridges between mainstream culture and the culture of students. They will build on the culture students bring to school and will educate students in the dominant trends of traditional culture (Holmes Group, 1990). Teachers will need to be skilled at balancing the themes of diverse cultures. Schools must provide students with the means to move into the mainstream, but also must not deny students the richness of their cultural roots and diversity (Holmes Group, 1990).

In the transformed school, staff development will play an even more important role than it does in today's schools (Cooper, 1991). Already many schools are bringing the teaching staff into greater roles and making teachers more responsible for their own staff development than in the recent past (Oja, 1991). The current research suggests that cooperative staff development with strong leadership from building principals is the most effective in changing instructional behavior (Rodriguez & Johnstone, 1986).

Assessment must be an ongoing process, not merely a once a year administering of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Students, parents, and the general public must be convinced of the necessity for

assessment and that the results mean something because an attitude exists among large members of the public that such tests are a waste of time and not worthy of a student's effort. An attitudinal shift must be effected, and students must take testing and assessment seriously. An attitude of continuous improvement must exist (Jensen, 1991). Local, teacher-generated grades must be relegated to a much smaller role in assessment than at present. Local grades may be over inflated and give parents and students a false sense of their achievement and thus an unrealistic view of the work they are capable of performing. Because of the lack of confidence in local grades, less than 20 of American employers surveyed ask for transcripts or a self-report on high school grades (Bishop, 1992). The United States is the only industrialized nation without a system providing externally graded competency assessment keyed to the secondary school curriculum (Bishop, 1992).

Site-based management with building principals and teachers taking a larger role in school governance will occur (Nathan, 1989). Parents will be more involved and schools will network more with other schools and with businesses in the local and statewide community (Szabo, 1991; Kadamus & Daggett, 1986). The traditional role of boards of education will diminish (Shanker, 1990). Planning councils of teachers, community members, board members, and building administrators will direct building educational planning and processes (ISEA, 1991).

The role of the superintendent which has been that of the educational expert in many communities will become more of a true chief executive officer (Schlechy, 1990) rather than a "super principal" which is generally the case at the present time in small and medium size

schools across the state of Iowa. The superintendent will become the change agent who facilitates the identified changes (Schlechy, 1990).

### **Summary**

The past 10 years have wrought considerable change in the economic conditions of the United States and the State of Iowa. Given the call by state and national leaders for new educational initiatives to reform America's schools and, thus, improve America's economic competitiveness, there are many courses for overall change in schools to take. The perceived status of district superintendents towards reform in Iowa schools is unknown. It is important to determine this perceived status because decisions on future direction will be modified on the basis of current progress in transforming Iowa schools into learning organizations meeting the needs of learners and employers. Daggett, Sergiovanni, Schlechy, Sizer, and others suggest that the transformed school will provide citizens with greater opportunities for becoming lifelong learners; learners who will compete effectively in a world where the United States does not dominate the economic life of the globe.



## Chapter 3

### METHOD

This chapter contains the methods and procedures I used in this study to investigate the superintendents' perceived status of the school reform and restructuring efforts in K-12 public school districts located within the boundaries of the Keystone Area Education Agency (AEA) in Northeast Iowa. The following sections will comprise this chapter: (a) Background, (b) Qualitative Research, (c) Subject and Setting for Study, (d) Collection of Data, and (d) Analysis of Data.

#### Background

The release of A Nation at Risk in 1983 provided the impetus for the reform and restructuring efforts in the United States that have been going on since that time. There has been nearly continuous debate since that time over how schools would be reformed. The American press popularized the argument that American education had lost its credibility. Educators and lay persons alike called for the reform, restructuring, and transformation of American schools. With over a decade having passed since the publication of A Nation at Risk there exists a need to determine whether education reform or restructuring was indeed taking place.

### Qualitative Research

For this study, I utilized a qualitative methodology to study the problem that I had identified. I wanted to view the problem from the perspective of a practitioner who would likely have a good overall perspective in any local school district, the superintendent of schools. It was important for me to be able to write about those expressed perceptions to better understand the progress of school reform in Iowa. By writing about and describing for other educators, both professional and lay, what schools in one AEA were doing concerning school reform initiatives I would gain a greater understanding of the issue.

Qualitative research is described as field research, naturalistic, ethnographic, phenomenological case study, interpretive and descriptive (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). The question of school reform is quite broad and can be viewed in a number of contexts. For this reason it is appropriate to record the perceptions (views, opinions) of informed professional educators.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) emphasize the particular usefulness of qualitative methods when research is exploratory or descriptive; that emphasizes the importance of context, setting, and particularly the subjects' frame of reference.

Borg and Gall (1989) identify the informant interview (participant observation) as the basic method of qualitative research. Survey interviews will also be used which will help establish validity of the informant interview process.

### Subject and Setting for Study

In this study I examined: (a) whether education reform is occurring in Northeast Iowa as perceived by local school superintendents, (b) whether the reform initiatives identified by the Keystone Area Education Agency in 1993 have been implemented and the degree of implementation.

The Keystone Area Education Agency is located in Northeast Iowa and is made up of 25 local school districts. This is a geographically compact area that comprises an industrial urban area and towns that would be considered small nationally, but in Iowa are seen as medium-sized cities. All the districts in the Keystone AEA, including the district that could be considered urban, have a significant rural service area. Because of the relative homogeneity and yet distinct population areas, I sent surveys to all 25 school districts. I sent a cover letter and survey instrument to all the districts asking that the superintendent complete the survey (Appendixes C & E). Additionally, the schools were divided into three enrollment size groups. Groups utilized were schools 700 and below, schools 700-1,500, and 1,500 and above. Two schools were randomly selected from each size classification for on-site interviews with the superintendent. Two additional schools were interviewed as the superintendents preferred to be interviewed rather than responding to a paper survey. Superintendents from 22 districts responded to the survey.

The on-site interviews provided in-depth analyses of the reform and restructuring efforts being pursued in those communities. The size

breakdown was utilized to provide balance among the all interviews did not come from one size classifica

## **Collection of Data**

### Instrumentation

The survey instrument was based on the reform previously identified by superintendents in the Keys Respondents for this study were asked to identify wh initiatives they perceived as being addressed in the districts. If a particular strand was being addresse cite examples of the particular reform in an open en

### Procedures

I conducted pilot surveys of the survey instru 1996. For the pilot I used school superintendents wh Keystone AEA, but generally familiar with the initia survey. I asked them to critique the survey and if t was being asked and whether it was too long. They ma formatting and, based on their comments, I determine could be filled out in a reasonable time frame by an the general school reform agenda.

Data was collected during the months of Februa 1996. Initial mailings were made in February with fc mailings in late March. Schools selected for on-site scheduled at the convenience of the cooperating schc completed the final interviews and the final follow- September 1996.

### Interview Protocol

Over a period of several weeks, I developed, tested, and experimented with an interview format and questions. The format and oral questions were drawn from the written survey questions (Appendix E) which reflected the superintendent-identified reform initiatives present in the Keystone AEA. This uniform interview protocol with only minor variations was used throughout the series of 10 on-site interviews. The length of time varied very little, as each interview was about three hours in length.

I wrote each potential interview candidate about the upcoming survey and my desire to include them as an interview candidate. Following the return of their written survey, I phoned the selected superintendents and scheduled the on-site interviews.

All superintendents who were interviewed signed authorizations for the sessions to be audio taped and for me to analyze the results that would be compiled for this study. (Letters of explanation and informed consent forms are found in Appendixes C and D.) During the interview the superintendent being interviewed had the opportunity to go off the record at anytime if a particular response or clarifying comment was not to become part of the audio record. Any negative comments would be reported anonymously. This allowed for a fuller exchange of ideas and provided me the opportunity to have a better grasp of their perceptions. This allowed additional flexibility to an already open-ended interview procedure.

All the interviews were conducted in the office of the superintendent being interviewed. I am personally acquainted with each

of the superintendents interviewed, some for as long as 20 years; allowing for immediate rapport and putting them at ease. Because I was taking nearly half of the working day, from what I knew from experience was a busy schedule, I wanted the interviewees to feel free to conduct district business if the need should arise.

### **Analysis of Data**

I did not transcribe verbatim the superintendent interviews because of the length of the taping sessions. I wrote a narrative summary of the interviews, covering critical areas in greater detail and length. The previously identified transformation strands served as a basis for development of the narrative covering each school. The narratives developed from paper surveys only were not as detailed as those that included both the paper survey and the on-site interview.

I also developed a method for charting the initiatives and showing at a glance which initiatives were being addressed in a particular school (Appendix F). From this chart I developed 24 pie graphs that illustrate at a glance which initiatives are being addressed (Appendix G).

These visuals provide an opportunity for a person using this study to quickly assess areas of greatest activity. They do not, however, address the degree of implementation of a particular initiative, but rather only if a certain strand is being addressed.

### Summary

The setting for the study included 22 school districts located within the boundaries of the Keystone Area Education Agency in Northeast Iowa. The research study focused on the perceptions of the responding superintendents on the school reform agenda.

I conducted a review of the literature to provide a broad overview of the school reform agenda that had been developing since the publication of A Nation at Risk, in 1983. I developed questions from reform strands that had been previously identified by Keystone Area superintendents in 1993 (Holland, 1993a) (Appendix B).

I conducted pilot surveys with four non-Keystone Area superintendents to test for clarity and understandability and to determine if the length of the survey was appropriate and could be filled out in a reasonable time frame. The survey was modified on the basis of their comments.

I interviewed and tape recorded superintendents in 10 school districts in the months of February, March, and September. I developed narratives from the 10 tape recorded interviews and the written surveys received from the 22 superintendents who responded.

### Limitations

The findings of this study were limited by the fact that all the informants were superintendents and their perceptions alone were recorded. The study was limited to a mostly rural Area Education Agency in Northeast Iowa and the questions were drawn from initiatives

identified in that AEA. The study was also limited because of its focus on a single assessment methodology.

Another limitation of the study was the possibility that the respondents could give distorted, exaggerated, or understated responses.

The study was limited to the perception of the responding superintendents on the identified initiatives.



## **Chapter 4**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

#### **An Overview of the Study**

Much has been written about the school reform movement since the publication in 1983 of A Nation at Risk. A generation of students has entered kindergarten and graduated from America's schools since that time. Two Presidents have focused attention on themselves as "Education Presidents," yet there has been scant documentation of how and which reform initiatives are being implemented in schools. In this chapter I present a "snapshot" of the school reform agenda as selected school superintendents in Northeast Iowa perceive it.

I collected the data I review in this chapter through analysis of written surveys and on-site interviews including taped sessions and personal notes during the period of February through September 1996. I interviewed, on site, 10 of the 22 responding school superintendents in the study. Those selected for on-site interviews were superintendents in Decorah, Howard-Winneshiek, Maquoketa Valley, North Fayette, North Winneshiek, Oelwein, Postville, Starmont, Turkey Valley, and West Delaware.

#### **Focus of this Study**

The focus of this study was a list of 24 reform initiatives identified by local superintendents in the Keystone AEA in 1993. These initiatives were broken into four areas: Transformation of Learning,

Transformation of Teaching, Transformation of the Organization, and Transformation of Management (See Appendix E).

Superintendents in nine (40.9%) of the schools perceive that initiatives involving the Structure of Learning are being pursued in their districts. The most common form of structural change being implemented is some form of multi-age grouping of students, with the elementary school being the most common level. One district, Western Dubuque, reported one elementary school entirely multi-grade in organization. Post secondary enrollment options are also cited as structural changes.

All 22 responding superintendents report the implementation of Tech-Prep/School-to-Work curriculums as the major structural change in their school's curriculum. While all responding districts have embraced this initiative, the rate of implementation varies greatly.

Fourteen superintendents (63.6%) report their districts are pursuing initiatives involving the development of student outcomes. The Keystone AEA is a major source for assistance in developing student outcomes, but by no means is it the sole source for those responding to this initiative. Some districts are using Goals 2000 as their model either alone or in conjunction with the Keystone AEA. The state mandated goal setting process contained in sections 280.12 and 280.18 of the Iowa code (280.12/280.18) also plays heavily in development of outcomes. Because of negative public reaction to "outcome based education," four districts use other terms for student outcomes.

Emphasis on the thinking process is being addressed in 16 (72.7%) of the responding districts, most commonly through the integration of

curricula involving higher order thinking skills. Three districts, Howard-Winneshiek, Decorah, and Starmont, are actively using brain research in their approach to the thinking process.

Experiential learning activities are being integrated in 13 (59.0%) of the responding districts. Specialized field trips are common and cross cultural activities are also used to enhance experiential learning. The hands-on activities of applied academic courses, part of several of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives, are also cited in this category. International travel is also cited as a significant activity in experiential learning; 7 (31.8%) districts promote the provision of an international perspective and the embracing of pluralism.

Twenty (90.9%) of responding superintendents perceive that learning as a lifelong process is being promoted in their districts. Many of these districts are philosophically committed to the concept and perceive the initiation of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative as key to promoting this concept.

Teaming among teachers is being implemented in 14 (63.6%) of the responding districts. The upper elementary and the middle school grades are the most active in implementing this strand.

Teacher planning for instruction is being addressed in 16 (72.7%) of the districts. Released time and provision of associate time are most often cited. Two districts have filed for innovative calendars to provide for additional teacher planning time.

The role of the teacher is perceived as being addressed by 12 (54.5%) of the responding superintendents. This is being addressed in a

variety of ways; one superintendent notes that the teachers are becoming facilitators of learning. The implementation of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is also viewed as changing the role of the teacher. Teacher empowerment and the implementation of school-based decision making models are also cited.

Twelve (54.5%) of responding superintendents perceive that their district is pursuing initiatives involving classroom management. The Iowa Behavioral Initiative is being implemented in two districts, Howard-Winneshiek, and another, North Winneshiek, is using a program from Drake University called Teaching Responsible Behavior. West Delaware has been implementing the Dubuque Management system.

Twenty (90.9%) of responding superintendents perceive that student evaluation is being addressed. The introduction of rubrics and portfolios are the most common innovations being cited. Standardized tests, including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED), are still being used but their place and usefulness are being questioned.

All 22 responding superintendents perceive the professional development of teachers as being addressed. The Keystone AEA and Phase III are by far the most significant factor in the provision of professional development activities for teachers. Two schools are actively involved in New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC); one, however, has dropped its affiliation feeling the program was not relevant.

One hundred percent of the superintendents report collaborating with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College. The

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is common in all the districts. The Keystone AEA Phase III school improvement consortium is a close second in the area of collaboration.

Thirteen (59.0%) of the superintendents report their districts are addressing school entry and graduation policies. Activities noted range from district funded pre-school for 4 year olds to a two-year kindergarten sequence. Graduation is most commonly being changed through the mandating of more credits for graduation.

Use of space is being addressed in 14 (63.6%) of the districts, some through the addition of new construction or renovation. Four of the responding districts have functioning Iowa Communication Network (ICN) rooms. One district, Eastern Allamakee, sees finances possibly barring their district from ever having one and Decorah has made a decision to not install one and is relying on other technology.

Sixteen (72.7%) of the superintendents perceive their district is pursuing innovation in the use of time. Block scheduling has been implemented by five schools and is being studied by four others. A calendar with a starting date before the state prescribed date is in operation or being considered by several districts. One district, West Central, is seeking to have fewer instructional days and add time for staff development, while still keeping a 192-day contract.

Seventeen (77.2%) of the superintendents perceive their districts are pursuing an innovative approach to curriculum, often in partnership with the Keystone AEA and involving a team approach to writing curriculum.

Twenty (90.9%) of the districts are using non-traditional decision making models. Several districts report the use of school based decision making models (SBDM). Increased participation of teachers is common to all of those reporting.

Staff assignments are being addressed by 8 (36.36)% of the responding districts. Generally the changes are coming about through such initiatives as block scheduling or increased teaming among teachers.

Eighteen (81.8%) of the superintendents see district direction being addressed. Often this is through participation with the Keystone AEA in the school improvement consortium. Technology is specifically cited by Decorah as the means for transformation.

District direction is very closely linked to the goal setting process which in turn is driven by the 280.12/280.18 process and requirements. Nineteen (86.3%) of the responding superintendents perceive their district is addressing this strand. Again the Keystone Phase III school improvement consortium is a major factor for most, but not all. West Delaware has totally tied itself to the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC) in the goal setting process.

Administrator and board development are being pursued in 17 (77.2%) of the schools. Finances generally govern whether a district is doing anything in this area. Board development is often limited to occasional usage of the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) Academy of Board Learning Experiences (ABLE) program. Three districts, Howard-Winneshiek, Oelwein, and West Central, have used an Iowa State

University professor for in-house board and administrative development activities.

### **District Summaries**

#### The Allamakee Community School District

The Allamakee Community School District of Waukon, in Allamakee County, has a student population of 1,574 pupils at four sites in Waukon and one in Waterville.

Initiatives affecting the structure of learning are not being addressed at this time.

A joint Tech-Prep/School-to-Work project is being conducted with the Eastern Allamakee Community Schools, the Keystone AEA, and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC). The superintendent does not further elaborate on the progress or cite specific activities being pursued as the school implements this initiative.

In addressing the student outcome strand, the superintendent notes that the Goals 2000 Standards and Benchmarks are being used. One of the Goals 2000 phases deals with the reasoning process and the district will adopt the standards and benchmarks as developed by and recommended by the district committee working on the project.

Neither experiential learning nor the promotion of an international perspective embracing pluralism is being addressed at this time.

The recognition of learning as a lifelong process is in the district vision statement for the district curriculum development projects. There is a district assumption that this vision will then

drive the school's curriculum towards the development of lifelong learners.

Teaming among teachers, teacher planning for instruction, and the role of the teacher are not presently being addressed.

Initiatives in the areas of classroom management and student evaluation are being pursued, but examples of activities were not provided.

The superintendent notes, without specific examples, that the current three-year staff development plan contains a "great deal of professional development activities for teachers."

The district is collaborating with a number of other agencies, including the Jobs Training Partnership Agency (JTPA), Allamakee County Substance Abuse Council and the Allamakee County Prevention Partnerships, The Keystone AEA, Eastern Allamakee Community Schools, and NICC on a variety of projects.

A study is currently being conducted on changing graduation standards.

Use of space and time is not currently being addressed.

The district approach to curriculum is being addressed through the cooperative program involving the Keystone AEA emphasizing Goals 2000.

A continuous process of working towards implementation of a school based decision-making model is cited. In the process, the district is re-defining the role of the superintendent, principals, and assistant principals as well as re-examining the full role of the management team.

Staff assignments are not presently being addressed.



District direction is being affected by a study group in operation for seven years. There is currently interest in moving toward a middle school concept (the district presently operates a three grade traditional junior high, grades 7 through 9). This is under consideration for implementation.

While district goals have been verbalized, the district is only now (Fall 1996) moving towards the development of written short-term and long-term goals.

Professional development for board members and administrators is addressed through a continuous encouragement of all levels of management to participate in professional development activities.

#### The Central Community School District

The Central Community School District of Elkader, in Clayton County, has a student population of 771 pupils at three sites, two in Elkader and one in Volga. The superintendent indicates that initiatives involving the structure of learning are not being addressed.

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives in collaboration with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) are being implemented.

Student outcomes are being developed and implemented throughout individual curriculum guides. The district is addressing the thinking process through infusion in curriculum guides as they are developed. Community advisory committees are also utilized as a part of this process.

The district is not presently emphasizing experiential learning beyond the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives.

As textbooks are adopted and curriculum guides developed, the district is infusing the principles of pluralism and an international perspective.

Lifelong learning as a process is addressed through the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives.

The district is participating in Writing Across the Curriculum and using this program as a vehicle to facilitate teaming among teachers.

Teaching guides are being and have been developed providing for initiatives in teacher planning for instruction, the role of the teacher and for classroom management. Student evaluation is addressed through these comprehensive teacher guides. The district is currently using teacher made tests and standardized tests; it is also implementing portfolios.

The district makes extensive use of the Keystone AEA, located at Elkader, in providing professional development activities for teachers.

Keystone and NICC are the main agencies with which the Central schools collaborate. The district also collaborates with the Northeast Iowa Community Action Program in providing a community preschool and in providing a Headstart program.

The district is examining its use of space and buildings as it plans for the installation of an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room in the near future. Presently the district has access only through the Keystone AEA ICN room even though Elkader is the county seat of Clayton County.

The superintendent has identified that the district is pursuing initiatives in the following areas: school entry and graduation

policies, use of time, district approach to curriculum, approach to decision making, the role of the superintendent and principals, staff assignments, district goals, and professional development for administrators and board members, but does not elaborate on those initiatives.

#### The Decorah Community School District

The Decorah Community School District, in Winneshiek County, has a student population of 1,781 pupils in five sites, all in Decorah.

The district is not currently pursuing any multi-age grouping initiatives.

The district is actively pursuing the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives in cooperation with the Keystone AEA and the North Winneshiek Community School. Additionally, it is working on a Goals 2000 project application that is described as "School-to-Life" and the superintendent expects to submit the application for this initiative in March 1997. The district is involved in partnering with local groups, not in a financial endowment partnership, but rather as a training partnership involving speakers and job shadowing activities. The district is a participant in the Keystone AEA school improvement consortium covering goals 2000, Phase III and 280.12/280.18. Members of the district advisory group are working closely with this consortium. Assessments and benchmarks are being done collaboratively. The Decorah District was about a year ahead of other districts in pursuing school improvement initiatives covered by the consortium, and was set back by joining the consortium; it joined for the strength the consortium offers.

The superintendent perceives that the district is now again moving forward. There was some staff frustration at being slowed up by becoming a part of the AEA initiative that is not yet wholly resolved.

Higher order thinking skills are being addressed by the district which is providing in-service speakers on brain research, focusing on the role of the teacher as a facilitator rather than a lecturer.

Currently, the concept of block scheduling for the high school is being studied by school staff and community representatives. The sixth grade teaching staff in the middle school is heavily into the teaming process for teachers. The teaming concept will be gradually introduced one grade each year in the middle school, 1996-97 for the sixth grade, 1997-98 for grades six and seven, and 1998-99 for six, seven, and eight. The superintendent perceives this as going well in the sixth grade with some anxiety at the next level scheduled for adoption. He sees the success of the sixth grade adoption related to the ability of the affected staff to work together.

Planning for instruction has not been expanded and in fact there may be less time available than for traditional scheduling. This is due to the heavy load (a pupil teacher ratio of 27-1 in the middle school).

The middle school is providing experiential learning in the form of units on fishing which involved fishing in a stream and highlighted the skills of planning, learning about, and doing the activities for the day. Camp EWALU, near Strawberry Point, is utilized for a three-day trip for middle school students.

The district is heavily involved in the provision of activities promoting an international perspective and multiculturalism. Travel to

Norway is a common event in the lives of many in the community. The community was a host to the King of Norway who visited in 1994. The district has 14 guest students from different parts of the world and has many resident Southeast Asian students attending school. The district teaches Norwegian, German, and Spanish; French is available through a cooperative program with Luther College.

Learning as lifelong process is heavily promoted, both throughout the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work process (recognized as School-to Life in Decorah) and through two computer simulation labs. One is housed at the middle school and is based on Scans 2000 and the other PT 2000 at the high school. By the time a student graduates he or she will have experienced modules in aerodynamics, television production, hydraulics, construction, and electricity.

Seventy-five percent of Decorah graduates go on to post-secondary education, with two-thirds of those going to four-year colleges and one-third to two-year colleges. The community is very reluctant to "jump on the bandwagon" and embrace any further structural change. The proximity of Luther and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) provides opportunities for students to access non-traditional programs. The superintendent describes the community as pleased with what is happening, but not complacent. Decorah students routinely place at the 96-98 percentile on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED).

The District has dropped out of the New Iowa Schools development Corporation (NISDC) because school representatives felt that process had nothing to offer Decorah.

All buildings and all teaching stations in the Decorah schools are connected to the Internet 100% of the time. The district now has Internet labs where full classes can be taken. The district has made a decision that technology is and will be the means by which the district will transform. The district is now in the second year of full availability of the Internet to all students. Students can also access the Internet at home through the school system.

The district is in year two of a three-year process that will allow students to access the school library from home, making learning at home as easy as learning at school. Student to computer ratio is one computer for every three students.

The district does not have an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room and unlike most other schools has made a decision to not have one. The ICN is seen as a waste of money and not an effective learning tool. The access to the Internet is seen as being more relevant to the needs of students. The district has invested in a large capacity server and is leasing a dedicated T-1 high speed data and voice line that comes directly off a line from Chicago.

The middle school is studying the variable use of time and the high school staff has visited other schools as part of their study process.

The superintendent sees a need for the district to re-focus on student evaluation. There is some usage of portfolios.

Classroom management is not being addressed as it is not perceived as a problem.

Staff development has been extensive and three years ago there was a decision to place a computer on the desk of every staff member that wanted one, approximately 70% of the total staff. The next year, the remainder of the staff wanted one as well, because the district instituted e-mail, seen as a powerful communication tool for intra-district communication. Teacher familiarity with usage of the equipment and development of a comfort level allowed the teachers to teach the students upon installation of the student equipment. Seventy percent of the students in Decorah have home computers. Graduation and school entry policies are not currently being addressed.

The district group of 31 people, referred to as shareholders, completed a community needs assessment in August 1996. These community members have been key to the school improvement process. They make recommendations on matters that are district wide with impact on the instructional program. Facility needs have been addressed and they do get into public relations. The campaign to update facilities is being led by this group. They have met monthly for four years, keep minutes and are covered by Iowa Chapter 21, the open meeting law. This committee reports monthly to the Board of Education and clearly understands that their role is that of a recommending body.

The district has moved from a superintendent dominated model to a team process model. This model is reinforced by the regular weekly meeting of the administrative team. Information is shared and decisions are made jointly. Consensus is reached before any decisions are made and the superintendent views this process as very effective. He views the principals as completely equal with him (the superintendent). Sometimes

ties must be broken. Non-professional department heads are also included in the meetings.

Staff assignments are perceived as potentially changing due to the aging of the staff. The plans for staff replacement call for interdisciplinary teaming and multiple certification of candidates.

The key element of professional development of the administrative staff is Ventures for Excellence. All district administrators are certified in this program, a program from Lincoln, Nebraska. Board development is not being especially addressed at this time.

#### Eastern Allamakee Community School of Lansing

Eastern Allamakee Community School of Lansing, in Allamakee County, has a student population of 552 and operates three attendance centers, two in Lansing and one in New Albin. The superintendent indicates that the district is not presently pursuing initiatives involving the structure of learning.

The district is an active participant in the Keystone Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium and the superintendent is Chairman of the Area School-to-Work Committee. The district has a Tech-Prep/School-to-Work coordinator paid through Keystone AEA.

The district is a participant in the Keystone sponsored Phase III funded school improvement consortium. This is being tied to the 280.12/280.18 development process which began with the 1995-96 school year. The district is working on student performance folders but is not calling the resulting standards "outcomes." They are instead referred to as performance standards.



In the previously cited Phase III consortium project, the district is pursuing initiatives in the thinking process through the AEA sponsored consortium rather than in a direct district development program at this time. When developed, these standards will be on the cycle for regular future assessment by the district.

The district is making efforts to provide and incorporate experiential learning into their curriculum in a variety of ways. The Eastern Allamakee Community School District is a very rural district located in the extreme northeast corner of Iowa along the Mississippi River. It is located some distance from urban areas, bordering equally rural areas of Minnesota. Because of this relative isolation, the district sponsors and promotes several student field trips to urban centers, including Washington, D.C., as a means of providing experiential learning.

Despite the inclusion of such trips in the curriculum, the superintendent does not perceive that they are pursuing initiatives in pluralism or embracing an international perspective.

Learning as a lifelong process is an adopted goal, giving special recognition of this as a key component in their Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative.

Teaming among teachers is being pursued through the introduction of teamed programming as an adjunct to facilitate teacher planning. Some teamed groups are: industrial technology with mathematics and business education with English. These joint courses are a part of the district's efforts in providing applied academic courses as a part of their Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative.

The role of the teacher is being changed as the district becomes more involved with the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative.

The district is moving into block scheduling and the superintendent perceives that the movement to block scheduling is causing student learning styles to develop in new ways to accommodate the new schedule.

Student evaluation will receive new emphasis as the district becomes more involved with the AEA Phase III school improvement consortium. Phase III is already a major source for funding professional development of teachers. On and off site presentations have been conducted with the assistance of the AEA.

The district collaborates with the AEA other LEAs, Allamakee county, Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) and work partners (not explained). NICC is cited as a very helpful partner. The district also cooperates with community day care and preschool programs.

The Board of Education is raising the number of credits necessary for graduation and block scheduling is making this possible. Block scheduling is perceived as a major innovation in the use of time and in the use of building space. Addition of an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room is perceived as being very questionable due to severely limited financial resources.

Innovative approaches to curriculum development are in place and operating but the superintendent emphasizes that those efforts are limited by the changes now occurring with Phase III.

New approaches to decision making are being used and key elements are stressing organizational lines and adoption of policies promoting

the changes. This has led to constant accountability for the superintendent and principals, evidenced through the evaluation of the superintendent.

Staff assignments are viewed as traditional except where the teaming is evident for the applied academics.

District direction is being addressed by the usage of a teacher-administrator committee that operates in conjunction with the district needs assessment committee. Establishment of district goals is an ongoing process, but this is not perceived as bringing about major changes in district direction.

Because of money constraints the district has not pursued initiatives in professional development for administrators and board members.

#### The Edgewood-Colesburg Community School District

The Edgewood-Colesburg Community School District of Edgewood, in Clayton County, has a student population of 699 pupils in two sites, K-6 at Colesburg and 7-12 at Edgewood.

Initiatives involving the structure of learning are not being pursued at this time.

The district is participating in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium through the Keystone AEA. Several applied academic courses have been added to the curriculum. Mathematics and language arts have been addressed and are currently being reviewed as a part of a continual evaluation and review process.

The district is addressing the student outcomes initiative as a partner in the Keystone AEA 280.12/280,18, Phase III school improvement

consortium. During 1995-96 Higher Order Thinking Skills were addressed and are now being incorporated into ongoing curriculum revisions.

Experiential learning other than concepts currently being addressed in applied academics is not receiving district emphasis at this time.

The district is not addressing any new efforts regarding an international perspective and pluralism.

The district recognizes the importance of learning as a lifelong process through the addition of applied academics; the teachers of all courses are encouraged to convey this message.

Teaming among teachers, the role of the teacher, or classroom management are not being addressed at this time.

Planning for instruction is being changed at the elementary level through team planning by grade groups.

Student evaluation is being revised through the addition of and usage of portfolios and rubric development. The district has tried Work Keys but has discontinued this process.

The professional development of teachers is viewed as an ongoing process with the Keystone AEA as an important partner.

Interagency collaboration is primarily with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) in the areas of Tech-Prep/School-to-Work and the school improvement consortium.

The district is not addressing school entry and graduation issues, use of space, and use of time.

The district approach to curriculum is described as "nothing special."

The issue of shared decision making is being pursued in a limited fashion, with teaching and administrative personnel collaborating. This is partially due to a part-time only superintendent that has been a pattern for several years. The roles of principals and teachers in decision making as well have been affected because there are times the superintendent is not available.

Neither staff assignments or district direction are being addressed, however district goals are targeted for review and revision in 1996-97.

There is some professional development for administrators, but virtually nothing is being done for school board members.

#### Fredericksburg Community School District

The Fredericksburg Community School District of Fredericksburg, in Chickasaw County, has a student population of 411 pupils on two sites. The district is pursuing the concept of multi-age grouping through the use of a combination second and third grade classroom.

The district is pursuing the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative in cooperation with Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa and Hawkeye Community Colleges. Other curriculum development is part of a regular review cycle involving teachers and parents. Through the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work program, the district is promoting the lifelong learner concept.

Student outcomes (locally identified as student assessment criteria) have been cooperatively developed with teaching staff and parent/community advisory group input. These are annually reviewed and are integrated into the district 280.12/280.18 goal development process.

While not directly addressing the thinking process, the district is infusing Higher Order Thinking Skills in all curriculum development and providing staff development training for teachers to implement these skills.

The district has taken a novel approach in its provision of experiential learning program. It has a cultural and youth exchange with the South Lamar School District in Alabama. While this does not necessarily promote an international perspective, it is seen as providing a multicultural approach for these northeast Iowa students. The developing Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is seen as also providing opportunities for experiential learning.

The district has initiated a peer mentoring and peer coaching program that is perceived as a key part of the teaming process for teachers. This, in turn, presents a changed role for the teachers involved. In-service time is made available for teacher collaboration. There is no perception that this affects classroom management, however.

Student evaluation is being addressed through the cooperative development of student assessment criteria. Through cooperative arrangements with the AEA, the district is providing on-site opportunities for professional development and recertification credit for teachers. The Keystone AEA and Hawkeye and Northeast Iowa Community Colleges are the primary agencies with which the district collaborates.

The district is pursuing changes in school entry and graduation policies, usage of space in buildings, and usage of time, but the superintendent did not elaborate in what fashion these strands are being addressed.

The district's approach to curriculum has been previously noted.

The district is developing and implementing some site-based decision making strategies. Staff input for district goal development and district direction are parts of this process. The community advisory group also plays a role in this process.

A team approach to decision making has been adopted, but the superintendent did not elaborate beyond this.

The staff assignments are not being addressed at this time.

The district is providing for professional development of administrators and board members but specifics are not identified.

#### The Garnavillo Community School District

The Garnavillo Community School District of Garnavillo, in Clayton County, has a student population of 348 pupils at one site.

Initiatives involving the structure of learning are not presently being pursued.

The district is participating in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium through the Keystone AEA. Through the usage of block scheduling the school is integrating more applied academics as a part of this initiative.

The district is not pursuing initiatives in the identification of student outcomes or any emphasis on the thinking process.

Students have opportunities for experiential learning through the provision of field trips, and hosting foreign exchange students. Through these efforts, the concepts of an international perspective and embracing pluralism are being promoted.

As part of its efforts of recognizing learning as a lifelong process the district is promoting adult education classes and is providing training for local factories assisting in the entry process. The district's Tech-Prep/School-to-Work program supports and promotes the concept of lifelong learning.

The district is not addressing teaming among teachers.

It is however, addressing teacher planning for instruction by the provision of "considerable time for staff development." The role of the teacher is viewed as changing but the superintendent did not further elaborate.

Classroom management and student evaluation initiatives are being implemented, but no examples are given.

Approximately three 4-hour blocks per month for professional development for teachers are being provided to teachers.

The district is involved in intra- and inter-agency collaboration, but does not elaborate beyond the Keystone AEA and unidentified local industries previously noted.

The issue of usage of space in buildings and the use of time is being affected by the implementation of block scheduling. The district is also operating with an innovative calendar it has submitted to the Department of Education.

The district approach to curriculum is being addressed, but no particulars are noted.

The approach to decision making used is described as traditional but there is a considerable amount of delegation and consensus building. This is a component of the part-time shared superintendency. This has



lead to what the superintendent describes as an, "Open Door, Progressive" view of the role of the superintendent.

Staff assignments are not being addressed.

District direction is viewed as moving forward to be ready for the 21st century.

District goal setting is hindered by a perception of lack of time for goal setting activities, but there are operational goals.

As a part of the professional development for administrators and the board an annual joint retreat is held.

#### The Guttenberg Community School District

The Guttenberg Community School District of Guttenberg, in Clayton County, has a student population of 556 pupils at one combined site.

The superintendent indicates that the school is not presently pursuing initiatives involving the structure of learning, student outcome, emphasis on the thinking process, an international perspective, or recognition of learning as a lifelong process.

The district is participating in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium through the Keystone AEA, but no elaboration is made about the district's progress or which specific strands of this initiative are being pursued.

Extensive efforts are being made to provide experiential learning activities for pupils in the district. Field trips are provided at all levels. Other activities include: an annual senior trip to Florida, the Art Club travels annually to Chicago, the high school band has performance trips, and the student senate takes a trip.

Teaming among teachers, teacher planning, the role of the teacher, and classroom management are not presently being addressed.

Student evaluation initiatives as a part of performance standards are being reviewed through the Northern Iowa Consortium on School Improvement (NICSI). This is dealing with 280.12/280.18 and Phase III as vehicles for school improvement.

Under professional development of teachers, efforts to provide access to and proficiency in usage of technology are ongoing as are efforts in the implementation of block scheduling.

The district is not heavily involved beyond the Keystone AEA in inter-agency collaboration and is not pursuing initiatives in school entry or graduation or of space in buildings. The district is, as noted, pursuing block scheduling as an initiative in usage of time and tried to implement an innovative calendar before the Department of Education allowed such innovations.

The district approach to curriculum is being addressed through studying and incorporation of The Performance Standards Project by the National Center on Education and the Economy.

Not presently being addressed by the school district are its approach to decision making, the role of the superintendent and principals, staff assignments, and professional development for administrators. It is, however, in the second year of having a part-time superintendent. This has had an affect on the role the principals must assume when the superintendent is not present.

District direction and district goals, particularly the 280.12/280.12 process, are being addressed through the Keystone AEA and NICS and a local district advisory committee.

#### Howard-Winneshiek Community School District

The Howard-Winneshiek Community School District of Cresco, in Howard and Winneshiek Counties, has a student population of 1,574 pupils at three sites in Cresco and one each in Elma, Lime Springs, and Ridgeway. This district is the third largest district in land area in the state, covering 434 square miles.

The district is pursuing initiatives in the structure of learning through the implementation of multi-age classrooms involving fourth- and fifth-grade students. The superintendent emphasizes that this is not simply a combination room. The teachers were prepared for this structural change through specialized in-services, visits to other multi-age grouped schools in Iowa and Minnesota and have been given additional associate assistance. This is perceived by the superintendent as a key element in the district efforts to make the Elma school a "Magnet School."

The Howard-Winneshiek schools employ a full-time K through 12 curriculum director and a part-time K through 6 curriculum coordinator. This district is currently working on developing the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work in the initiative. Numerous contacts have been initiated with the local employers. Staff from the businesses will be coming to the school to work with students, students will be placed in the local businesses for job shadowing activities. The district is teaching Principles of Technology in the high school. The curriculum is fully

integrated and coordinated. This is seen as reducing duplication and strengthening the academic delivery to students. Whole language instruction was cited as an example of this integration. Central to these efforts has been the district emphasis on cooperative learning.

The district is offering a full array of applied academic courses as a part of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative.

Locally developed courses with student outcomes have been adopted by the school board. Baseline data are being collected for each grade level to identify what students should know at each of those levels.

The district is pursuing initiatives involving the thinking process through use of available studies in brain research for teacher in-service activities.

The district is using the Talented and Gifted (TAG) program as the main vehicle for providing experiential learning. Students are currently tracking how Iowa history applies to the local area. Field trips are used to augment the in school activities. Students are provided job-site activities as an adjunct to the Tech-Prep/School-to-work activities.

The district is actively embracing an international perspective and also providing experiential learning activities through the provision of international travel through the district foreign language program. The district teaches four years of Spanish and three years of French. The superintendent has the goal of introducing foreign language at the elementary school level. The district also teaches American Sign Language; this has been an enlightening experience for the regular education students.

The district has the goal that all students are motivated to be lifelong learners. The superintendent does not, however, cite examples of how this is being pursued.

The district is heavily involved in the teaming of teachers through their cooperative learning efforts and is providing additional planning time for those in the team as the district moves toward block scheduling. The district also has monthly Friday in-service activities that provide additional planning time. It does not use early dismissals or late starts for staff development time.

The district has initiated building level site-based management teams and the school board has given each site based team \$1,000 to spend. It is hoped that the funds will benefit the delivery of instruction. This is their third year for the site based teams. The superintendent perceives that the teams deal more with management/administrative issues than with educational issues.

Student evaluation is being addressed by the development of baseline data for each grade level as to what a student should know and be able to do. Considerable use is being made of student portfolios. On the basis of on testing research the district is now using standardized tests only every other year for grades three through eight. The superintendent expressed concern about the value of standardized tests because of the many variables students bring with them to school. He sees the performance on tests as only an indicator, at best. This is leading to more teacher generated tests using a pre- and post-test model.

The Ridgeway Elementary School is entirely on rubrics. The district has made use of sample rubrics developed by other agencies. The superintendent sees the development of rubrics as quite time consuming, thereby fostering the use of prepared rubrics. Parental acceptance has not been complete and thus elements of the letter grading system persist.

The district is involved in the Iowa Behavioral Initiative. One elementary school is actively pursuing this initiative. Paraprofessionals as well as teaching staff are receiving in-service training in the behavior program.

Portfolios for staff evaluation are being considered because of a perceived need for a more substantive evaluation process. This is leading to the development of a new evaluation model for teachers. The district has been a participant in School Improvement Model (SIM) since 1983-84, and, though the superintendent perceives that it has been good for the district, he concludes SIM does not alter the behavior of teachers.

The district has a technology coordinator responsible for facilitating and actively providing the staff development activities for the staff on how to use the newly available equipment. How to use e-mail and access the Internet are cited as examples of current in-service activities.

There is active inter- and intra-agency collaboration ongoing in the district. The district is involved with the Northeast Iowa Community College and Keystone AEA in curriculum development and the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative. The district received a \$10,000 start-up

grant for School-to-Work, but is not involved in the Phase III school improvement consortium. The AEA liaison person is included in the administrative cabinet meeting. The district technology director works very close with AEA staff. The district is 65 miles from the AEA office and that is seen a limiting factor for the use of many AEA services.

Initiatives dealing with school entry or graduation policies are not presently being pursued.

The district has an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room in place and was one of the original Star Schools.

The district has been using an innovative calendar where additional in-service days have been added to the calendar to protect the integrity of the 180 instructional days. The calendar provides one Friday each month for staff development outside of the 180 instructional days. Staff members are required to attend by master contract and it specifies that they must come "with an appropriate attitude." Phase III funds are used to pay for these days.

The district tries to limit use of early dismissals and late starts for inclement weather.

The current curriculum development cycle is independent of the AEA sponsored cycles. All development is coordinated by the district curriculum director. The distance to Elkader is a reason for an independent process.

The superintendent has administrative cabinet meetings every Tuesday morning. They include principals and the professional level managers, and also non-certified department heads. Twice a year each

principal is required to read a professional book or journal and report to the administrative cabinet.

The role of the superintendent and principals is viewed as a cooperative effort and the superintendent sees that his role is to select good people and then allow them to do their jobs. The superintendent is the negotiator for the district with the state certified bargaining units and relates that this is a major role for him. The chain of command is not followed well by patrons and much time is expended dealing with problems that the superintendent should not have to deal with. The superintendent views himself as an "Idea Person." He is a participatory manager and spends "a lot of time" providing information to board members to make meetings more effective.

Staff assignments are traditional in nature and substance.

District direction is primarily through the 280.12/280.18 process. This process and the district goal setting process is facilitated by the curriculum director and the committee is very active.

Board development and self-evaluation has relied heavily on a program facilitated by an Iowa State University professor at the local level.

#### Maquoketa Valley Community School District

The Maquoketa Valley Community School District of Delhi, in Delaware County, covers 185 square miles, has a student population of 1,040, and operates four attendance centers, two in Delhi and one each in Earlville and Hopkinton. The district has a very senior and



experienced staff. In the vocational areas Principles of Technology have been added and the district is in a second year of this program.

Initiatives involving the structure the structure of learning are not being pursued at this time.

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives are being implemented at the senior high school. This has been the focus of numerous committee meetings and has been extensively studied. There have been several applied academic courses added to the curriculum that focus on the student who is not following the traditional college-bound curriculum. Math, science, and English all have been addressed and district staff members have made visits to both out of state programs and in state programs. The principal has been the primary leader for this initiative. The superintendent is very satisfied with the progress made by the district and while he does not see Maquoketa Valley on the forefront, expresses his belief that Tech-Prep/School-to-Work is doing well in Maquoketa Valley.

The examination of student outcomes is primarily in the 280.12/280.18 process, having generally identified learning outcomes related to that process. The district acts on a set of situations when a problem arises. The superintendent and the district (as noted from needs assessment data) place a great deal of stock in the usage of standardized tests and regularly share the results with the community at large. The success of students on conventional testing has not given rise to a need to examine non-traditional forms of evaluation. Administrative leadership stresses working hard to achieve solid results on the standardized tests. Much of the success the district has with the

standardized tests is attributed to the low turnover of experienced senior staff.

The district pays all expenses for professional development activities when initiated by the district. When initiated by the employee, the salary and substitute costs are paid by the district with other expenses borne by the employee. Phase III has also been used, where appropriate, to support professional development activities. The district is closely examining infrastructure and is using a citizens committee to promote a bond issue in the near future to upgrade facilities. If the bond issue passes, age grouping at the centers would change.

The district is scheduled to be hooked into the Iowa Communication Network (ICN) in 1997-98 and has rooms available for this without the proposed new construction. Substantial local funding has been spent on computer technology. The district is working with several local community agencies to broaden community availability to technology in such areas as Internet access.

Phase III has been instrumental in the district's curriculum writing process as well. Beginning in 1988 the district had a performance pay plan for three years but dropped it due to most teachers receiving "exceeds district standards."

Experiential learning is handled primarily in the applied academic class situations.

There are presently no particular efforts to promote an international perspective or pluralism.

Lifelong learning has been and continues to be stressed in the Maquoketa Valley Schools; it is a mind set communicated to staff, students, and the public. Infused activities provide the thrust for this concept. District efforts to promote the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives lend themselves to the lifelong learner concept. District leadership emphasizes that the students are learning how to learn, as much as learning content and subject matter.

Portfolio assessment is being examined at the fourth through the sixth grades, but assessment otherwise is generally viewed as traditional. The district is examining the concept of student led conferences and has an advisor/advisee program in place.

Keystone AEA I has been a partner in the presentation of the staff development activities done in-house for the district. Phase III funding has been utilized as a major source of funding. The district has a shared curriculum coordinator with the West Delaware school district, but is moving to hire its own full-time staff member. This is due to the increased efforts of the state to promote school improvement initiatives. Policy decisions by the district board reflect the district position that to properly respond to and take advantage of the opportunities, a staff person dedicated to the areas to be addressed is necessary. The superintendent believes this will result in the district efforts being more focused. Extensive staff development has been provided to bring teaching staff to a level of comfort for using the available technology.

The role of the principal is perceived to be changing to more direct involvement with the child study teams, particularly in the areas

of special education needs. The role of the superintendent has changed; there is extensive delegation of duties to the board secretary with this position being given duties much like a business manager (but not the title).

Graduation standards were raised several years ago when the new Iowa Standards (1988) were adopted.

The district is not anticipating adopting an innovative calendar or schedule. Staff consensus on anything other than a traditional calendar is not likely at this time.

The district approach to decision making is team oriented and although the superintendent retains the right to veto, he does so very rarely. The team meets weekly and is also expected to attend meetings of the board of education. The weekly meeting also includes non-certified department heads. The superintendent perceives his role as changing to more of an oversight role than a direct hands on role as in the past.

#### The MFL/Mar-Mac Community School District

The MFL/Mar-Mac Community School District of Monona is a newly reorganized district in Clayton County, with a student population of 1,116 pupils in five sites, two in Monona, two in McGregor, and one in Luana.

The district is not presently engaged in any multi-age groupings or other non-traditional structure formats, but staff members have discussed the concepts.

The district is in the early stages of involvement in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative at this time. The articulation of nine

vocational courses with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) is viewed as a primary step towards more comprehensive involvement.

The district is in the process of identification of student outcomes, called learning expectations, through the 280.12/280.18 processes using community involvement. Initiatives on emphasis on the thinking process are not being addressed at this time.

The district is involved in the provision for and incorporation of experiential learning at the middle school, grades six through eight, through the facilitation of what is described by the superintendent as "major field trips," with no further explanation.

Presently no particular steps to promote an international perspective are being taken.

Learning as a lifelong concept is not being particularly emphasized.

Teaming of teachers and innovative planning models for teachers are receiving some emphasis; as a result the role of the teacher is perceived as changing in the district. The district is assigning teachers to teach exclusively in their major areas.

Classroom management is viewed as traditional with no efforts underway to change current patterns.

Student evaluation and alternative assessment methods are being studied by the district. Vocational offerings in the high school are being articulated with the Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC). Model portfolios for student evaluation have been cooperatively developed. Development of learning expectations through community involvement in the district advisory committee is currently in progress.

The district is involved with the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC) through professional development of staff members. The district is also involved in collaborative projects with the Keystone AEA in such areas as the consortium school improvement project.

School entry and graduation policies are not being addressed at this time.

District usage of space in buildings is currently being studied and there is much discussion related to the reorganization of the district. The district is in the planning stage only for installation of an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) Room. It has a voted Physical Plant and Equipment Levy (PPEL) levy in place for facilities needs.

The district is currently piloting new time scheduling models in parent-teacher conferences; it operates with a traditional calendar and day. An innovative calendar is viewed as possibly desirable.

The superintendent does not perceive the district pursuing any new curriculum development models.

The district approach to decision making is traditional with minor staff responsibilities just being introduced. The role of the superintendent and principals is traditional, with the exception that the superintendent was shared between the districts before the actual reorganization.

Staff assignments are being addressed through participation in NISDC.

District and goals are being addressed through the 280.12/280.18 process.

Professional development for board and administrators is viewed as traditional; however, the board has used Keystone AEA consultants for board development activities.

#### North Fayette Community School District

The North Fayette Community School District of West Union, in Fayette County, has a student population of 1,213 pupils at five sites, three in West Union and one each in Hawkeye and Fayette.

North Fayette is doing a limited amount of multi-age-grouping in reading and math in the elementary school, but nothing in other levels with the exception that high school elective courses are often multi-age grouped. Post-secondary enrollment options (a program allowing juniors and seniors to enroll at district expense in two- and four-year colleges) are currently being used by some gifted students.

The district is a partner with the Keystone AEA in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium. A Career Pathways Grant received from the state will allow for Work Keys testing. This is currently being piloted with 15% of ninth and eleventh graders being tested. The district hopes to expand the testing to more students in the future. Work Keys people will be profiling local area businesses. The district operates an existing Multi Occupational Cooperative (MOC) program and is now providing a program to have mentors for students in employment. The district has a Tech-Prep/School-to-Work coordinator who is also a full-time teacher. Applied math and applied communications are currently operating in the high school program. Staff appears to have accepted the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative, but most have not yet been affected. The community is perceived as unaware of the program. Staff

acceptance may be affected because the skills required for teaching the new applied classes will be different and staff who have not been back to school may not be prepared. Linkages to the community college may also be a factor. The superintendent perceives awareness rising statewide as testing progresses. He sees this happening as business becomes knowledgeable about levels of proficiency needed and the levels a student may have achieved. Two possible results are that students will go back to schools and demand more preparation or businesses will have to provide remedial assistance. The superintendent has been actively involved in the area in planning for these changes and sees this as a statewide movement.

In terms of other agency involvement, he sees the proximity of Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) providing for more involvement in the district. Partnerships will mitigate duplication of expensive equipment.

The district is hiring a technology coordinator to assist teachers and bring direction to the use of technology by teachers. Teachers have had regular in-service work to establish a comfort level with the technology. Administrative computers will be networked.

Student outcomes are linked to the 280.12/280.18 process through the AEA school improvement consortium funded by phase III. Three groups of teachers are assigned to this process. The areas being developed for this year are Higher Order Thinking Skills and Technology. They are being directly tied into the 280.12/280.18 process and the eight goal areas and Goals 2000. This will provide multiple assessments in addition to the traditional Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of



Educational Development (ITED). This is perceived as being a growth area for the district.

In alternative assessments, the district uses both portfolios and rubrics. All the English curriculum guides, developed two years ago, for K through 12 are rubric based. The proficiency level for the applied academics will be in a skills portfolio. He sees different levels of skills necessary for different positions, but the district and employers have not reached the same conclusions yet.

The superintendent perceives the process of transition from the traditional curriculum and expectations to the career-oriented curriculum as at least a 10-year process because many parents still have the vision of their children graduating from a four-year college program. This is a major paradigm shift for the public. Colleges, he contends, continue to give parents and students unrealistic expectations regarding employability and earning potential upon graduation with a four-year degree.

Experiential learning is heavily emphasized in North Fayette. The district has a strong Spanish, German, and English exchange program. This has been an ongoing program for at least 10 years. Because of this commitment, students have more opportunities for exposure to a multicultural, pluralistic approach to education.

Extensive work is being done on teaming at the middle school level (grades six through eight). A workshop was facilitated by the middle school principal from Fort Dodge. Plans call for the entire middle school to be fully teamed and courses team taught in the next year or two. The approach would be cross disciplinary, including: (math and

science) and (social studies and English). The fine arts, particularly art and music, are being brought into the process. The middle school is the district leader in this process, with the high school doing very little in teaming; the elementary program is basically self-contained.

Early dismissals approximately four times per year are used to augment and expand teaching planning opportunities. Phase III funding has been utilized to compensate teachers for doing planning activities outside of the regular school day. Some staff are doing outside planning on their own time. Public criticism of early dismissals causes this to be used in a limited fashion. The superintendent sees this being overcome when there is a positive message about the program provided. Technology is seen as a topic the general public understands.

Teacher role and classroom management are not being addressed at this time.

Student evaluation issues are being addressed by the consortium school improvement project through the Keystone AEA and using Phase III funds.

Professional development of teachers in areas other than generally outlined previously is somewhat limited. Funding for these kinds of activities is not generally available. Programs such as Tech-Prep/School-to-Work, Talented and Gifted (TAG) and science and math (Eisenhower funding), where funding is available, have extensive participation.

Inter-agency collaboration is extensive through the AEA and the district cooperates with the ministerial association, the Chamber of

Commerce, the economic development board and The Northeast Iowa Community Action Program.

Graduation standards are very traditional with 45 credits being required for several years. School entry is very traditional.

Use of space in school building is under study with a contract for an audit being let. A need for additional classroom space exists due to aging portable buildings. Board voted physical plant and equipment levy (PPEL) and an instructional support levy are in place, but there is no patron voted PPEL. The superintendent believes that the state technology money infusion will have a major impact on technology addition.

The district is studying the possibility of going to a block schedule at the senior high school; it is currently using a modified block. The superintendent is the prime mover in providing the impetus to examine the block format. The superintendent is keenly interested in scheduling and sees this as a means to cause teachers to change their instructional approach. Traditional approaches, he believes, do not work well with a two hour block. A recent equity review recommended moving to semester-based courses. This would allow students to take more courses, particularly non-traditional courses. He is quite aware that the current district thrust is top down and understands the problems that can be created by this approach, but he is hopeful that the advantages become apparent to staff as they are made more aware of the possibilities.

The superintendent is a three-year Institute for the Development of Educational Activities (IDEA) Fellow (sponsored by the Kettering Foundation).

Team management is well developed in the North Fayette District, with principals responsible for their own building budgets. The role of superintendent is seen as acquiring more job responsibilities. There are more things ongoing all the time.

District goals are being developed through the Keystone AEA cooperative projects for 280.12/280.18. The teachers are very accepting of this process. Parents are a key part of the change in the assessment process. Parents also review district short- and long-range goals. Students have also been involved in the assessment process.

The district is in a five-year curriculum development cycle through Keystone.

Little time is found for professional reading except for journals. Board workshops are held locally for board in-service.

#### North Winneshiek Community School District

The North Winneshiek Community School District, Rural Route Decorah, in Winneshiek County (physically located near the unincorporated hamlet of Burr Oak), is a totally rural school district without any town within its borders. It has a student population of 420 students in one single building central campus.

North Winneshiek is doing multi-age grouping modeled on a traditional combination room format, but all second and third graders are intermingled among four or five teachers. This has been a long ongoing program with the principal and parents very supportive of this program. The students are doing some grade-alike activities. The superintendent has some concerns about reading scores, but has no data that the multi-age grouping is the reason. Fifth and sixth grades are

also multi-age grouped. Concern about section size was the original driving force for this. There have been some parental concerns at this age group. This past year there have been three teachers working with this group and each teacher is an "expert" in a given area, i.e., math and science, etc. It is seen as teaming much like teaming in a middle school. Teachers are teaching in their strongest areas and this is seen as providing an excellent transition to the seventh grade. Community support for this program, that will be in the fifth year for 1996-97, is growing.

North Winneshiek is actively involved in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative and has appointed a coordinator. The district is seen by the superintendent as being still in the formative stages. Staff development activities have been held in conjunction with Keystone AEA. The district thrust for this initiative is grades 9 through 12. Math and science are the areas currently targeted for the development of applied academic courses. Staff development is seen as the key for implementation of these initiatives. Participants in the state Tech-Prep/School-to-Work conference become core members in bringing other staff members on-line. The district is a participant in the Keystone consortium for Tech-Prep/School-to-Work. Some staff members believe everything should be geared to the four-year college-bound student, but the superintendent believes progress is being made in promoting the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work program.

The district technology committee is functioning and the district will be networking everything in the building. Progress is being made in integrating technology into the curriculum. The superintendent sees a

strong need to change the junior high curriculum which is currently very traditional with no teaming.

Whole language is the thrust in the elementary school but there is an ongoing discussion, particularly at the junior and senior high levels, whether that is the appropriate approach to reading instruction.

Student outcomes are generally covered under the 280.12/280.18 goals setting process and now North Winneshiek is a member of the Phase III funded Keystone AEA school improvement consortium. A core group of teachers meets monthly with other teachers to work on this project. He perceives the public still believes schools are turning out students who cannot communicate in oral or written forms and cannot do simple math. He sees a need for schools to better communicate what they are doing. Students are perceived to be entering school unprepared to begin school. Change, he believes, is being driven by economic development, and he sees the Nation at Risk report as the beginning of the process.

Higher Order Thinking Skills are incorporated into the Phase III plan and are infused into the general curriculum.

Experiential learning is limited; Luther College is a source. An active parents group, Parents And Teachers Together (PATT) bring in cultural programs to the school setting.

The district is using Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) staff in a cooperative arrangement to teach industrial technology courses. Luther College and Upper Iowa University are also utilized in cooperative programs. German is being taught by Luther College personnel.

Little is being done in promoting pluralism and multi-culturalism.

Lifelong learning as a concept is being promoted and there is a strong commitment to it through regular curriculum integration and a commitment to bring other groups into the school. The superintendent uses a newsletter to promote lifelong learning.

The superintendent is not sure the community has knowledge of what students need to know to function in the broader society. This is evidenced, he concludes, by the lack of expectations shown by graduating seniors; many just want to get a job. A number of parents in the district, in his view, see high school graduation as terminal.

Teaming among teachers is implemented in the multi-age grouped fifth and sixth grade. The district has multi-disciplinary units between the social studies and language arts classes. The district also uses the facilities at Luther College.

Planning for instruction is generally traditional with six periods of a eight-period day used for instruction. Before and after school unassigned time is also used for planning and staff development activities.

Four new teachers were hired this past year and three were recent graduates with no prior experience; this led the superintendent to institute a program for these new staff members. The program, Teaching Students Responsible Behavior, is being facilitated by the superintendent and students will receive credit from Drake University. He sees this as an area that has been neglected in teacher preparation. A total of eight staff members are participating. Participation in this came about because of teacher and parent concerns that students were not accepting responsibility for their own behavior and the high number of

inexperienced staff. There are expectations those participating in this program will become better managers in the classrooms.

Student evaluation is generally traditional and some concern is expressed that over 50% of the sixth grade class is receiving either resource room or Chapter I assistance. There are concerns about how these students will fare in the very traditional textbook oriented junior high program.

North Winneshiek is also participating in a Keystone consortium on a Career Pathways Work Keys assessment project. Every student in grades 9 and 11 will be tested. The superintendent hopes this will lead to a better understanding of how the students will perform in the areas of work-based learning. He sees this as a method to measure how well students are prepared to obtain entry positions in the immediate field of work. The counselor and Tech-Prep/School-to-Work coordinator are receiving in-service instruction in the assessment methods. Portfolios are being used to a limited degree in the elementary school and there has been staff development activities provided.

Professional development is heavily oriented to the Keystone programs throughout the year. The classroom management program is an exception. Phase III dollars are going to the 280.12/280.18 development process through the AEA consortium.

The community accepts the linkage with higher education very well. The Northeast Iowa Community Action Agency--(Head Start) and Job Training Partnership Agency (JTPA) are other collaborative agencies for the North Winneshiek Schools.



The district has completed year five of a Pre-Kindergarten program for four year olds, funded from local dollars, not weighted dollars. The district operates two sections on alternate days. This program is well received by local kindergarten staff and parents and there are tuition enrollees from outside the district.

Computer Assisted Drafting is being held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2-4 p.m. under an agreement with NICC.

Nothing is being done at this time on an innovative calendar or other time options.

The three full-time administrators meet weekly and operate with a team approach, but final decisions are the superintendent's. Teachers have opportunity for input on many decisions, but major budget decisions still belong to the board and superintendent.

The superintendent views himself as the district educational leader, with roles also varying with size of a school.

A citizens committee is studying the district direction and will report on a five-year and three-year plan as a part of the 280.12/280.18 process.

Board professional development is largely through the Academy of Board Learning Experiences (ABLE) program sponsored by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) and attendance at the annual IASB state conference. Administrative staff development is tied to School Administrators of Iowa (SAI), IASB, and Keystone activities. The superintendent attended the Keystone sponsored superintendent's retreat; held for the first time in the spring of 1996.

### The Oelwein Community School District

The Oelwein Community School District of Oelwein, in Fayette County, has a student population of 1,639 pupils in five attendance centers, all in Oelwein. This district is actively involved in transforming activities.

One elementary school building is currently involved in implementing multi-aged grouping. This is not merely the addition of some combination classrooms. The 1995-96 year initially involved what would be traditionally viewed as first and second grades at the Parkside Elementary School.

The district, a recognized area leader, is involved in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative, having received one of the federal/state grants for this initiative. The 1996-97 school year will be the third year for this program. This program is emphasized through the establishment of "Academies" which can be viewed as schools within schools, but one in which applied academics are assuming an increasingly larger role alongside the more traditional college prep curriculum. The district has had a long commitment to vocational education operating a successful Multi Occupational Cooperative (MOC) program. The addition of the applied academics was very well received by the community. The district and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) are coordinating the district's efforts in Tech-Prep/School-to-Work.

The district is developing student progress measures based on identified outcomes. The staff is involved with community representatives in this process. Currently the 5th, 8th, and 11th grades

are being measured and reported to the public through the 280.12/280.18 goal setting and reporting process.

The district has addressed emphasis on the thinking process through the infusion of Higher Order Thinking Skills into the regular curriculum process. One year ago there was special emphasis placed on this phase of the curriculum development process.

The district's emphasis on the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work through the applied academic initiatives provides the main thrust for experiential learning in the school district. The district is not presently concentrating on specific activities to promote this.

There are no efforts directly promoting an international perspective.

Through the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives, the district is promoting the lifelong learning concept.

The district operates a middle school; this level has been the focus of well-supported district efforts to allow for teaming of teachers at that level. The district is committed to providing the necessary planning time needed for teachers to develop team activities. This is being accomplished through the use of additional paid educational associates. This additional planning time is primarily at the middle school, but is available on a limited basis for the senior high. This has changed the traditional role of the teacher and the middle school is becoming reflective of the middle school model. Although there are no separate initiatives dealing with classroom management, teaming is actively being promoted and is seen as beneficial

for middle school students. The district has an Iowa Communications Network (ICN) room in operation at the middle school.

The district is involved with other agencies, particularly with community agencies that deal with services to families and children. There are monthly meetings with representative of these groups. The district is involved with both the Keystone AEA and NICC. The district has received a School Based Youth Services Grant with which the school provides services to families and parents.

The district is presently developing policies, procedures, and methods to work with home-school parents. The district has for over 10 years operated an alternative kindergarten program and is an active partner with the Northeast Iowa Community Action Program in offering Headstart programs.

The district is promoting a \$4.8 dollar facilities construction and renovation bond issue.

The district operates on a traditional school calendar and the school day for secondary students is eight periods, with certain vocational subjects being held during "zero" hour (classes before the first period of the day).

District curriculum development efforts reflect a team process with initial development coming from district teaching staff at the department level to district wide committees then through the administrative council and lastly to the board of education.

The district approach to decision making has been enhanced by the provision of formal training in consensus building. The administrative

team concept is embraced and actively promoted by the superintendent and board.

Staff assignments are viewed as traditional with the teaming assignments in the middle school the primary exception.

District direction and goal setting are largely tied in to the 280.12/280.18 school improvement process. The district is a part of the Phase III funded school improvement consortium sponsored by the Keystone AEA and the other participating schools.

The Board has provided for its own professional development through the use of non-district professional facilitators, which includes a professor from Iowa State University well known for conducting board development activities. District administrators are encouraged to attend state and national conferences; the district also pays for administrator attendance at professional development classes.

#### Postville Community School District

Postville Community School District of Postville, in Allamakee County, has a student population of 672 pupils in three sites on a central campus in the town of Postville. This district serves a mostly rural area and enrollment is expected to stabilize.

The structure of learning is addressed through multi-age grouping in grades K through two reading instruction. First grade instruction for other areas is divided into three levels.

The Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is being introduced alongside a strong existing Multi Occupational Cooperative program (MOC) component for seniors that predated Tech-Prep. The district is also participating in Career Pathways through the Keystone AEA consortium.

The superintendent expressed concern that the district was not as far along on the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative as desired, approximating progress at 3 on a 10 scale. He perceives there is a great need to add additional computer technology, particularly networking the classrooms. The district does not have any applied academic programs in place at this time, but it is fully articulated in the ongoing vocational offerings with identified competencies in those course areas.

The district is presently not pursuing student outcomes other than those being reported under the 280.12/280.18 process.

The district is collaborating with the Keystone AEA on implementation of Higher Order Thinking Skills particularly through the usage of computer technology and audio and visual materials for both teachers and students. Technology education is a priority across the grade spectrum, with exploratory classes emphasized at the lower grade levels. Labs are provided for all of the grade divisions. Most computer technology is of recent vintage, reflecting the district commitment to this area.

Little is being done in experiential learning although the concept of pluralism is evident as the Postville community has two industries that employ a number of foreign nationals. There is a large colony of Russian Hassidic Jews and a smaller group of Hispanics. The district cooperates with the local Hassidic school and provides tutoring services for these students and for the significant Hispanic student presence in the public school. There is extensive integration of the immigrant students, many who have come in the past 10 years, in the district and

in-service has been provided to teaching staff on diversity using staff from the University of Northern Iowa.

The district sees a strong commitment to lifelong learning as its mission. The commitment is demonstrated by the emphasis on providing all learners with opportunity to reach their potential. There is a commitment by the community articulated by the board that students must be well versed in the use of technology.

Teachers at the high school level are teaming in science and family science (home economics) to provide more depth in those areas. Students in the seventh and eighth grades are receiving teamed cross discipline instruction in language arts and social studies.

Teacher planning for instruction is being expanded by the addition of aide assistance in the elementary school. In the high school, instruction time for teachers is limited to six of eight class periods.

The role of the teacher is emphasized by the addition of empowered building level committees. Aides are utilized to allow the teacher to serve on these committees during the regular instructional day. This has been received well by parents and others in the community as indicated by comments received personally by the superintendent. He views this as an area targeted for continuous improvement cycles. The teaching staff, especially at the middle school where efforts are currently concentrated, are strong supporters of these efforts. The Postville staff are mostly long-term faculty members of more than 15 years in the system.

Classroom management is enhanced by in-service days devoted to dealing with inclusion of special education students in the regular

programs. Classroom teachers have released time for visitations to other schools.

The school currently operates a traditional eight-period day, but has begun studying the concept of block scheduling. This process, initiated by a teacher committee, has included visits to other schools; received encouragement from the new principal. A low number of course offerings is seen as a possible bar to implementation, but the veteran staff, good media center, and science labs are pluses.

Student evaluation is still largely traditional, with the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) and the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) the centerpieces for student assessment. The use of portfolios, primarily at the elementary level, has been ongoing for the last five years.

The Keystone AEA has been a key partner in the district's professional development plan for teachers. As a participant in the Keystone Phase III school improvement consortium, the district is able to strengthen its staff development program.

Both Eisenhower and Perkins funds are used for science, math, and the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work in-services.

The district has a major partnership with the Keystone AEA in the school improvement through the Phase III school improvement consortium. This project has lately been received better than it was upon initial presentation. For example, teachers now see that they have a more meaningful role in goals development. Staff development activities are closely coordinated with the Keystone AEA. Phase III has been the major funding source for district school improvement activities.



The school has a two-tier kindergarten program with the lowest tier limited to 12 students in the class. Students attend all day four days per week. Teachers are employed on a four-fifths time contract (.8 full time equivalency). By having less than full-time teachers and programs, funding is available for two classes. Funds are not sufficient for two full-time teachers. This school has implemented a rigorous policy on attendance at the high school level; a student who misses four or more times must go before a teacher committee. This was done because of student abuse of the previous policy and has had a positive affect on student attendance. Current credit requirements have been in force for about 20 years.

The district has adequate space for technology, special education, and adult education. Installation of the Iowa Communication Network (ICN) is scheduled for 1998.

The district is considering an innovative calendar for the 1997-98 school year. There is a desire to have the semester end at winter break rather than having two weeks remaining in January.

The district is working closely with Keystone AEA on the 280.12/280.18 advisory committee in terms of the needs assessment process.

The district has a formal policy relating to team management. The principals and the superintendent have almost daily meetings due to the buildings all being on one campus.

All administrators are encouraged to attend appropriate AEA, state, and national meetings. The school board has been going to appropriate Iowa Association of School Board (IASB) sponsored meetings.

### Riceville Community School District

The Riceville Community School District of Riceville, in Howard County, has a student population of 582 pupils at a single site in Riceville.

The superintendent indicates the district is not presently pursuing initiatives involving structure of learning, international perspective, pluralism, teaming among teachers, the role of the teacher, school entry, graduation policies, or staff assignments.

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives are being pursued and industrial arts classes are being restructured. The district is also adding additional technology to the curriculum as a part of the move to the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work concept. The district is now offering applied mathematics classes as a part of its efforts with its approach to Tech-Prep/School-to-Work. These efforts are in collaboration with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC).

The district is studying the usage of available building space as a step in the planning for installation of their Iowa Communication Network (ICN) room.

The superintendent perceives that the district is pursuing the following strands, but did not identify any specifics concerning the particular initiative: Identification of student outcomes, recognition of learning as a lifelong process, teacher planning for instruction, classroom management, student evaluation, professional development of teachers, use of time, approach to decision making, the role of superintendent and principals, district direction, district goals, and professional development for administrators and board members.

South Winneshiek Community School District

The South Winneshiek Community School District of Calmar, in Winneshiek County, has a student population of 702 pupils at three sites, the high school building located in Calmar and the middle and elementary schools in Ossian.

The superintendent indicates that the district is not presently pursuing initiatives involving the structure of learning.

The district is participating in the Keystone AEA sponsored Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium, but the superintendent did not elaborate on any specific components being addressed.

Student outcomes are not being addressed beyond those being studied within the context of the Keystone AEA school improvement consortium.

The thinking process is being addressed in the same manner as part of the goals through the AEA.

Experiential learning is being addressed through the provision of field trips; the superintendent provided no particulars on age levels or activities being addressed.

An international perspective and pluralism are not being addressed at this time.

The Board of Education has formally adopted as a goal the concept of lifelong learning.

Teaming among teachers is not being addressed at this time.

Teacher planning for instruction, the role of the teacher, classroom management and student evaluation are all viewed as being addressed through the Keystone AEA school improvement consortium. Each

participating district has a teacher team as well as district administrators participating at regular meetings that address 280.12/280.18, Phase III, and other issues that involve school improvement issues.

The district has a committee developed district staff development plan that includes the professional development of teachers.

The Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), and the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC) are the primary agencies this district is involved with in the area of interagency collaboration.

The district is not presently addressing school entry and graduation, use of space in buildings, or use of time.

The district approach to curriculum is heavily dependent on the AEA consortium. The district and consortium approach both require systematic review and revision of the district's curriculum.

As a participant in NISDC, the district is addressing the initiatives dealing with the decision making process, role of principals and superintendents, staff assignments, district direction, district goals, and professional developments for administrators and boards through activities sponsored by NISDC. There is no elaboration as to any specific activities.

#### Starmont Community School District

The Starmont Community School District of Arlington, in Fayette County, has a student population of 964 pupils all located at a rural, central campus site.

The superintendent views himself as the leader of the change process with principals playing highly visible, yet subordinate roles. School improvement is the term regularly used in Starmont. He sees administrator roles as providing leadership for the district school improvement efforts.

The district has piloted a multi-age classroom in third and fourth grades with more involvement scheduled for the 1996-97 school year. This is part of the district transformation plan and had been in the planning for some time. The program was started with the intent to reach average to below average pupils. He believes the plan is going very well partly because of the strength of the teacher in the pilot program. He believes this creates more work for the teaching staff. Keeping students with the same teacher for two years, which eliminates the getting acquainted period in the first three or four weeks, is seen as a particular strength. This is part of a systematic approach to the entire elementary program becoming developmentally appropriate. Children will be aligned in developmentally alike groups. He hopes this will keep students from being lost and falling behind and prevent the frustration that results from this sort of event. This has been very well received by the parents. A full multi-age pathway is being proposed to the board and community along with a traditional age-based pathway. Parental choice is a key element. There is 90% staff approval on going entirely multi-age grouped. The school became involved with the Effective Schools Research initiatives in 1991. An Effective Schools Committee has provided the leadership for the transformation process. The committee has identified what a Starmont graduate should know and be able to do.

Curriculum development is on a five-year cycle on a cooperative basis with Keystone AEA. The Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is part of a county wide consortium (coordinated with the AEA) and is just in the beginning stages. Tech-Prep/School-to-Work is viewed locally as assisting in making people employable.

During 1995-96, the district assessed reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The primary assessment tools are staff developed rubrics along with other teacher made authentic assessment devices. The staff developed rubrics with the assistance from AEA #7 staff. Teachers are encouraged to use both rubrics and other assessment devices. Portfolios are a major assessment tool in the elementary school. Wide latitude is provided for individual initiative. While staff support is good, there is still skepticism on part of some teachers. The superintendent related that one teacher (not identified) said to him, "Why do we have to get this complex and how are the results to be used?"

The superintendent sees Starmont at a very critical crossroads and the information gathered must be used in a more meaningful way. He sees this information gathering as the driving force for the entire curriculum development process and believes it will result in better scope and sequence themes. He believes the use of rubrics will promote better results from students and that rubrics communicate expectations better. He believes that the results so far are very positive. Conferencing with parents is made easier because parents are given something concrete. The middle school staff is using both portfolios and rubrics; the senior high school staff is the primary user of rubrics.

Higher Order Thinking Skills and critical thinking processes are integrated into each curricular area as each area is identified and developed. He believes schools must understand brain function and the nature of learning to transform schools.

He is still trying to simplify and streamline the school improvement process to make it less cumbersome. Lifelong learning is being infused in the curriculum development process and some things are being thrown away. The emphasis K through 12 is on how to learn, i.e., the learning process, how to become lifelong learners rather than merely teaching students a body of facts. There is a recognition that some traditional classroom activities are wasting valuable time.

School-based decision making (SBDM) was initiated by the previous superintendent. The present superintendent has continued and built on previous work. This is very popular with the staff, even though the process becomes quite cumbersome at times. The superintendent believes increased input and variety of view points going into the decision making process results in better decisions than if just made by the superintendent or principals.

The role of teacher is viewed and promoted as a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Block scheduling is being studied and an adoption is planned for 1997-98 in the middle school (grades six through eight). Block scheduling will cause the use of different teaching methodologies. The entire approach to the teaching and learning process in Starmont is tied to the brain research being studied in district in-services and at out of district workshops.

In 1995-96, there was all day alternate day kindergarten; all day every day is being implemented for 1996-97. As the district moves to block scheduling, credit requirements will be examined and the board is considering a service learning component being incorporated into existing courses rather than a separate requirement for graduation.

The district is in the second year of a modified calendar with school starting a week earlier than other schools. The district desired to get on a semester arrangement similar to colleges and to allow students easier access to post secondary enrollment options. The district, as perceived by the superintendent, believes the traditional calendar with a two-week break before the last two weeks of the semester was/is ludicrous. The winter break should come between semesters to avoid having a lost week (or two weeks) requiring re-teaching.

Curriculum writing is aligned to the eight skill areas outlined in 280.12/280.18 development process. Most work is done in-house.

He sees a need to provide additional staff development for administrators. Board members are made aware of opportunities to participate in the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) Academy of Board Learning Experiences (ABLE); he does not go himself. He goes annually to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) annual conference and the principals alternate each year in going to an appropriate convention.

#### Turkey Valley Community School District

Turkey Valley Community School District of Jackson Junction, in Fayette county, has a student population of 588 pupils all in a single



central complex in the rural (but incorporated) community of Jackson Junction.

The district has a limited amount of multi-age grouping in which the fifth and sixth grade are in a combined social studies arrangement.

The district is actively pursuing Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives, but the district progress is not at a level which the superintendent desires. The district has appointed a Tech-Prep/School-to-Work coordinator. Presentations have been made for the board of education and staff and parents. The initiative has not been embraced by the staff; there is some resistance, in his view, because of a staff perception that Tech-Prep/School-to-Work is a "vocy" kind of thing. This, he believes, is not what it is or is intended to be. The superintendent conceives it as having been presented correctly and completely. He will now take a different approach and will be bringing block scheduling in as a replacement for their traditional eight 51-minute periods standard schedule. The district is considering a four block each day versus an eight block on alternating days. (A day and B day.) Teachers would be able to teach more courses because of the additional flexibility.

A smaller staff currently teaching five or six preparations will have fewer preparations and teach only two or three at a time, taking the load off the teachers. Under a four-block system, he sees courses becoming nine weeks long and some (but not all) current year courses becoming semester long.

He is tying this into the district goals and is not calling it Tech-Prep/School-to-Work, but rather applied academics, applied

learning. The term Tech-Prep/School-to-Work is not being used to any degree locally. The staff is not generally aware of what Tech-Prep/School-to-Work is, but they are aware that Keystone AEA has received a Career Pathways grant. The district will be doing some random Work Keys testing as it is part of the consortium involved with the Work Keys grant. He agrees with colleagues who are farther along and their goal of testing all students on Work Keys. He wants and believes the district can get to that point but is not now at that point.

He envisions efforts in this area as facilitating block scheduling to be able to implement applied academics. There are no applied academic courses in place; he believes implementation is two years away. He views caution and slower implementation as necessary to avoid failure of the concept, and cites Outcome Based Education (OBE) as an example which was not received well in the Turkey Valley District. This part of the district school improvement plan refers to learning standards which becomes key components of the applied academics concept.

There is an infusion of Higher Order Thinking Skills in course work, one of the eight areas targeted for assessment under 280.12/280.18 this year. The district is using a matrix to assess each of the eight areas every four years and is now in the middle of the second cycle.

Experiential learning is not being addressed, although as the applied academics course come on line there will be a limited amount there. The concept of pluralism is being addressed in a limited integrated fashion.

The district has adopted a new vision statement this past year recognizing lifelong learning. This came about after a year of study

with the district leadership team analyzing the needs assessment data. There had never been a formal district vision statement. The district utilized the service of an outside facilitator. The concept of lifelong learning came through very clearly from the needs assessment.

In the area of teaming among teachers, the school submitted a grant application to the Carver Foundation that would have combined science with math and social studies with language arts in the seventh and eighth grades. The seventh and eighth grades have had a very traditional pattern of organization. District consensus viewed the plan as unique and called for implementation of the concept even when the grant application was not approved. Staff acceptance was generally good, even though implementation has been slowed by a lack of funding. He sees adequate financial resources as very important, but difficult in a fourth year 0% budget growth district.

In student evaluation, the district is beginning to use rubrics. Most teachers are reporting to the superintendent that they are more likely to be using a rubric or some other alternative assessment tool rather than traditional assessments. The district continues to administer standardized tests, but the district advisory committee and superintendent question the validity of the tests, question what the media does with the results, and question how parents view the tests. He sees test results as misused and believes that some students simply do not take tests well.

Turkey Valley is cooperating with Keystone AEA in the Phase III funded school improvement consortium.

School entry has been modified with the addition of all day every day kindergarten. Graduation credits will be examined if the district adopts a block schedule, thus allowing students to take more classes.

Use of space is being addressed by introducing block labs (double period) and by the proposal for block scheduling. Seventh grade math and science are being grouped together. The high school principal wants to go to block scheduling, but is meeting some staff resistance. The Board of Education is mostly supportive and a major presentation was been given to the board. Block scheduling may have to have a top down mandate from the board to overcome some resisters. A move was imminent.

The move to block scheduling is seen as the only district innovative initiative in its approach to curriculum.

A successful school-based decision making model (SBDM) has been in place for three years in the elementary school. It has a core team that generates the agenda for the full team. This is not a totally true site-based team because it is functioning without parents, but their inclusion is the next step. The secondary school introduced SBDM two years ago and the process is not successful. The superintendent perceives secondary staff as turf oriented and a handful (three or four) described as "know it alls" are "agin it." "Clock watchers" is how he describes them.

The role of superintendent and principal in shared decision making is going slow. He is frustrated. He is trying to keep separate board decisions and administrative decisions; presently upper levels of the budget are not part of the shared process. His goal is for the board and

superintendent to make fund allocations to the elementary SBDM team and they will make final allocation decisions.

Usage of time is really addressed under the block scheduling.

Staff assignments are beginning to change and will greatly change with the implementation of block scheduling.

District direction is addressed through the 280.12/280.18 process.

He believes the district is ahead of other districts in the setting of district goals. The administrative team concept is operating as a core leadership team. A local administrative retreat with an outside facilitator was held in the spring of 1995. The district is beginning the development of a public relations plan and work on an ongoing basis for planning for 280.12/280.18 process. He sees the needs assessment process as being very important and the recent assessment a success as compared to five years ago when data was a zero.

Little is being done for Board professional development as it is difficult to get busy members to in-services. Academy of Board Leadership Experiences (ABLE) meetings sponsored by the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) are perceived as not being conveniently scheduled for rural boards. The IASB state conference is a mainstay for professional development for this board.

#### The West Central Community School District

The West Central Community School District of Maynard, in Fayette County, has a student population of 425 pupils at a two-building central campus.

The superintendent indicates that the district is not presently pursuing initiatives involving the structure of learning.

The district is participating in a four-school Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium in Fayette County. The four schools including North Fayette, Valley of Elgin, and Turkey Valley have received a \$10,000 planning grant. Additionally, the district is participating in the larger Keystone AEA sponsored Tech-Prep/School-to-Work consortium.

The district offers several applied academic courses that involve cross department cooperation between mathematics and industrial technology and language arts and industrial technology. The industrial technology instructor is also the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work coordinator.

The district has identified outcomes that it will focus on in conjunction with the Keystone AEA sponsored 280.12/280.18 school improvement and Phase III Consortium funded through Phase III. The superintendent does not identify any specific outcomes.

During the 1995-96 school year, as part of the school improvement program, the district placed particular emphasis on the thinking process and in particular Higher Order Thinking Skills. These are being integrated into the districts curricular revision process.

Experiential learning had been emphasized as a major component in the Phase III program prior to the district's entry in the Keystone AEA Phase III consortium. This program provided for cross cultural activities for students. The district's relative geographic isolation was a prime factor in the initiation of these activities. Some activities conducted were: exercises on how to ride a city bus, attendance at ethnically oriented festivals, and foreign travel as a part of the foreign language curriculum.

Experiential learning activities are also included in the district applied academic courses.

The district is providing additional emphasis on an international perspective and pluralism partly as a result of an educational equity audit during the 1995-96 school year. The district had long provided opportunities for foreign travel on an alternate year basis through the foreign language program. The district offers Spanish and in recent years has provided travel opportunities to Spain, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Mexico. This activity is highly valued by the three communities comprising this district.

The district efforts in lifelong learning are more philosophic in nature, embracing the concept rather than active promotion. The applied academic courses support this concept by their very nature.

Teaming among teachers is described as sporadic at best, with applied academic courses providing the greatest measure of teaming activities.

The district is providing for planning for instruction through continuation of an empowerment mode instituted in 1992. Teachers implemented teacher developed action plans for technological literacy and thinking skills during the 1995-96 school year. Teachers are provided additional time for planning through regular early release days, ongoing since 1992.

The role of the teacher continues to be expanded by emphasis on teachers being responsible for making more decisions. This process has been in place since 1992 and has grown to include teacher

representatives being included on school committees and even providing input in the development of board of education goals.

Classroom management is not being addressed at this time.

Student evaluation is being addressed primarily through the AEA sponsored school improvement consortium. The district has been involved in the development of vocational competency portfolios as part of the articulation process with two community colleges.

All teachers are being required by the superintendent to develop individual professional development plans. He is further insuring that all teachers are actively involved in educational research by requiring that the individual professional development plans be research based.

The district actively collaborates with the Keystone AEA, Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), Hawkeye Community College (HCC), Upper Iowa University (UIU), and the Northeast Iowa Community Action Program. Because of the proximity to UIU in Fayette, West Central is a major recipient of student teachers and pre-student teaching activities. Northeast Iowa Community Action is the sponsoring agency for Headstart and West Central has had joint agreements with this agency since 1994.

The school graduation and entry policies have been the same for several years and are not currently being addressed.

Use of space is not currently being addressed as the district enrollment has been in decline and lack of space is not a problem. Some discussion is occurring about replacing the mobile classrooms used since 1977 for the first through the third grades.



The district will be submitting a "creative" calendar for 1997-98 to the Department of Education calling for fewer instructional days and more days for staff development. They are also studying the possible implementation of block scheduling. There have been visits to neighbor schools using block scheduling and any final decision will be a joint staff decision.

The district approach to curriculum is primarily through the AEA consortium.

The district approach to decision making is being actively addressed and is described as Empowerment of All Employed. This has been an ongoing district initiative since 1992 when a long-time superintendent who had centralized all decisions in her office retired.

The role of the superintendent and principals are being addressed through this same initiative as decisions are decentralized.

Staff assignments are not being addressed at this time.

The superintendent notes, "Obviously, with new administration (since 1992), the (district) direction has been altered. We're trying to encourage staff to take risks, find new and better instructional strategies, etc."

District goals are basically unchanged since being developed in 1992. The district used a facilitator from Iowa State University at that time.

There is a great deal of emphasis on professional development for district administrators. The superintendent and principal are expected to attend professional meetings and read current professional

literature. He made no comment specifically addressing board development.

#### West Delaware County Community School District

The West Delaware County Community School District of Manchester, in Delaware County, has a student population of 2,031 pupils at five sites in the city of Manchester.

Little is being done with the structure of learning, the attendance centers are organized K through 4, 5 through 8, and 9 through 12.

The district is a participant in the New Iowa Schools Development Corporation (NISDC). Because of this participation, the school board adopted the All Day Everyday Kindergarten concept in 1995-96. Also a result of this project, elementary art was taught by a specialist rather than the regular classroom teacher.

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives are being actively pursued with expansion in industrial technology. Appropriate staff have completed core strands that are articulated with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC). The school is actively seeking input from private employers in the local area that in turn is being shared with the district teaching staff. Faculty reaction has been very positive, and the Phase III plan has been incorporated with this initiative. School staff members are going out into the community to visit with private employers and are bringing back a new perspective to the rest of the staff. The superintendent sees a need for collaboration between elementary-secondary education and higher education in evaluating the applied academic courses being developed and taught. He has had

discussions with a member of the Iowa Board of Regents specifically about this concern.

The new kindergarten attendance pattern was adopted based upon research showing that consistency of program is highly important. Local staff saw the all day alternate day program in place until 1995 requiring too much re-teaching, thus children were not showing the educational gains they should have. Winter time was a particular problem because weather emergency dismissal days disrupted the alternate day schedule. The community has been very supportive of this change and the former alternative kindergarten has been rolled into the regular program. He describes the kindergarten program as developmentally appropriate.

Much effort has been extended in working on student outcomes for the senior high school. Staff have visited other Iowa schools perceived as leaders in the development of learner outcomes. High school staff members, principals, and community members are active at this time in the development process. Outcomes being examined are purely academic and not connected with any sort of social agenda. He believes this clear separation has prevented the opposition seen in some communities. Staff reaction has been mixed and the momentum may be slowing a bit. This slowing is attributed to a realization of how big the task of developing appropriate outcomes is.

The high school has studied going to an eight-period day and the staff are currently studying block scheduling. It did not seem likely that an eight-period day would be used as a transition. If block scheduling is adopted, it will be fully implemented fall, 1997. South

Tama, College Community, Maquoketa, Eldora-New Providence, and Wapello schools have been studied as part of the potential adoption process.

Higher Order Thinking Skills are being integrated into the curriculum, particularly the math and science curriculum, but applied skills are also being emphasized as the curriculum is revised.

Applied academics are a key component in the district Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative. They have been well received by the community with little questioning as to the validity of such courses. The acceptance of the new applied academic courses has not been a problem with the community college or the private colleges. They are a problem primarily with the Iowa Regents institutions and for students attending programs sanctioned by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The elementary and middle schools are doing a great deal in the incorporation of experiential learning activities. This is being accomplished through increased activities outside the school and outside of the regular school day. Hands-on projects have been greatly expanded and the community supports these new activities well. Local businesses are providing cash contributions to underwrite some of these activities.

Few minorities live in the school district, but there is an active American Field Service (AFS) Chapter with four exchange students enrolled in the high school during the 1995-96 school year. District foreign language classes (French and Spanish) take trips on an alternating year basis to language specific countries. Students are provided with a global perspective thorough curriculum integration and leave school with a strong background in multiculturalism. The district

is providing opportunities for the study of Russian via the district Iowa Communication Network (ICN) facility.

The concept of lifelong learning is being heavily promoted and the district is working on providing student access to the Internet from their homes via the ICN and Iowa State University. The district is cooperating with Upper Iowa University (UIU) and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) in providing additional learning activities for adults in night classes using the district facilities.

The district has completed two years with the middle school operating on a teaming concept. The staff is in constant and regular contact with parents. The middle school curriculum consists largely of interdisciplinary units. The district also has an adviser/advisee program in the middle school to provide a formalized structure for students and teachers to communicate.

Teacher planning for instruction is augmented by released time days throughout the school year.

Staff development for teachers is also provided under the released time concept (early dismissal days). The district is making a financial commitment to bring in nationally recognized speakers. The district has extended an offer for other districts in the Keystone AEA to participate in these presentations. Regular district funds and some Phase III funds are being used to finance these ongoing activities.

The school early on (before it was a requirement) embraced the concept that the 280.12/280.18 process, Phase III, and the NISDC goals and staff development all should be operating with the same goals and

objectives. Beginning in the fall of 1995, members of the committees from the other group began sitting in with the NISDC committee.

The role of the teacher is changing because of the perceived changed needs of workers to work together, rather than teachers making students work alone. Learning as a process is emphasized.

Classroom management is enhanced through the changed role of the teacher and the district is also using the Dubuque Management System; providing teachers new ways to manage student behavior.

Student evaluation continues to rely on the traditional assessment tools of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED). The use of portfolios is being examined to provide for more individuality in evaluation of students. He believes the community may not understand the proper usage of standardized tests, i.e., comparing one community's scores to another. The superintendent perceives the community is generally comfortable with the level of student performance.

Teachers in large measure provide for their own professional development, but the salary schedule is structured to reward this. The district also makes use of the Keystone AEA activities and as indicated earlier provides nationally recognized speakers for in-service. Phase III has not been used for achieving advanced degrees, but rather for individual projects instead. Released time has been provided to a limited degree.

The district cooperates with the Keystone AEA, NICC, Maquoketa Valley, Oelwein, and ED-CO school districts on various projects.

In 1996-97 the district will be integrating the junior kindergarten into the regular program. If the district goes to a block schedule in 1997-98, the number of credits required to graduate may be examined, the rationale being that the double block will allow more courses to be completed in a year. Currently the district requires 48 credits.

The district examined the possibility of offering some "zero" hour classes (classes before the first period of the day) for the eighth grade at the middle school. The decision, however, was to not do so at this time. The district has just completed a major addition at the senior high school thus significantly increasing the space available for programs.

The district calendar is traditional; there has been little staff interest in looking at innovative calendars. The superintendent sees starting early without air-conditioning as a significant negative factor. The district currently has five pre-service days before school starts and has looked at going to four days pre-service and have one day in the middle of the year to minimize the early dismissals and the impact those have on the community. However, the teachers on the calendar committee did not favor that change, so the calendar will remain the same with no early dismissals.

Loss of the full-time curriculum coordinator has slowed the efforts in curriculum development.

The superintendent is a proponent of a collaborative management style, but clearly believes that some decisions are best made by one individual and that the nature of the superintendency will always be

that way. A participant in NISDC, the district has a strong commitment to site-based decision making. The administrative cabinet meets weekly with the superintendent and deals with district level issues to provide consistency in decision making across the district. He sees the collaborative process as providing time for measured discussion of an issue and allows for input which makes better decisions.

The administrative cabinet is not just professional administrators; it involves the business manager and non-certified department heads as well. The superintendent is involved in the hiring of teachers but primary responsibility falls on the principals. The superintendent uses a committee process for the hiring of principals. This involves community input, teacher input and other principals. The final decision is made by the board from two finalists taken to the board.

The NISDC goals are the district's 280.12/280.18 goals, in place since 1993. There are discussions going on within the local NISDC group about re-visiting those goals.

The superintendent actively encourages other administrators and the board to participate in professional development activities. The superintendent participates in American Association of School Administrators (AASA) activities. Board members occasionally go the National School Board Association (NSBA) convention. A majority of the board does attend the Iowa Association of School Boards (IASB) annual conference in November.



Western Dubuque Community School District

The Western Dubuque Community School District of Farley, in Dubuque County, has a student enrollment of 2,662 in eight sites, two in Epworth, two in Farley, two in Cascade, one each in Dyersville, and Bernard. This is the largest school district in terms of land area in the State of Iowa, covering 555 square miles.

Western Dubuque is making an extensive commitment to changes in the structure of learning. The district operates one elementary, Bernard Elementary, that is totally committed to the multi-age concept. Groupings are first and second, third and fourth, and fifth and sixth in terms of the relative arrangement.

The district is heavily involved in the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiatives and has received a grant for School-to-Work and Career Pathways. This involvement is in cooperation with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC).

The district is not pursuing initiatives directly related to student outcomes, but there is active discussion ongoing.

Emphasis on the thinking process and particularly Higher Order Thinking Skills have been addressed at the Cascade High school.

Experiential learning is addressed through the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work programs and also through the district's summer school program. There are also two week-long student trips to the American West which provide opportunities not available in the local communities.

An international perspective and embracing pluralism are not being addressed.

The district has formally adopted lifelong learning as a district goal, and the commitment to the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative illustrates this strong commitment.

Teaming among teachers has existed for over five years in this school district. This has been particularly emphasized in the multi-age program at Bernard elementary.

Teacher planning for instruction is not being addressed at this time. The role of the teacher related to multi-age grouping and the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work program is the primary focus for the changes in the role of the teacher.

In classroom management, the district is a participant in and involved with the Iowa Behavior Initiative, a program which addresses district-wide discipline as well as student discipline issues at the building level. Throughout the year participants will have six days of intensive training.

Student evaluation methodologies beyond the traditional Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) are being studied.

Professional development of teachers is being addressed, but the superintendent noted no particular practices.

The district is working with the Keystone AEA and has worked with a number of colleges as well as NICC to provide college credit for students while in high school. (This is not the post secondary enrollment option). The district is also seeking recognition of skills developed in high school so they need not be repeated in the community

college. The superintendent hopes that close articulation will accomplish this.

The district has recently revised graduation policies. Recent passage of a bond issue has permitted the district to evaluate and change the usage of space in district facilities. The district, however, does not yet have direct access to an Iowa Communication Network (ICN) classroom.

The district has requested and received approval from the Department of Education to start classes in August at a time different from the current state standard. The 1995-96 school year was the first year for implementing an innovative calendar.

The district indicates it is pursuing new approaches to curriculum, included is the inclusion of Tech-Prep/School-to-Work and applied academic courses, the college credit courses for students while in high school, articulation agreements with various community colleges for granting of credit for community college-bound students.

The district has adopted a building level decision making model and is committed to this practice.

The superintendent believes the role of the superintendent and principals has changed significantly, and the movement to building level decision making has been a major component.

Staff assignments are changing as the district move towards more team teaching and is involving more staff in this model.

The district direction is moving to becoming a more comprehensive service provider as the district adopts a variety of new initiatives,

Tech-Prep/School-to-Work, School Based Youth services, and Career Pathways being cited.

Board and Administrator professional development is cited as being addressed, but without any specifics being noted.

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

My purpose in this study was to document the state of school reform as perceived among superintendents in the Keystone Area 1 Education Agency in Northeast Iowa. I accomplished this through a written survey and on-site interviews based on school reform initiatives identified in the Keystone AEA in 1993.

The basic question I addressed is: What perceptions do school superintendents express on the school reform agenda (transformation, restructuring, improvement) occurring in their school district?

#### Summary

Beginning with the A Nation At Risk report, there has been a continuous stream of public recommendations, national and state goal statements, business initiatives, and local efforts to reform America's public schools. Although educational change appears simple from the perspective of the popular press, reform (also referred to as transformation, restructuring, improvement) of schools is a complex and time consuming task.

Iowa's 379 school districts are at many different stages in the process of reform and have embraced different reform initiatives. Little data exist to show just where Iowa schools are in the reform (transformation, restructuring, improvement) process.

As a practicing superintendent, I perceived a need for Iowa superintendents to have access to information on reform initiatives being pursued in other school districts. This study has given me the opportunity to broaden my own understanding of the school reform initiatives and assist me in successfully implementing appropriate change models in my own district.

To properly assess the current state of affairs and to bring the findings down to the practitioner level, I limited the size of the group studied. I chose the Keystone Area Education Agency of Northeast Iowa because of geographic compactness of area and a perception that the schools were generally representative of Iowa schools.

I developed and used a survey instrument and interview protocol to determine what Iowa school superintendents perceived as the status of reform (transformation, restructuring, improvement) efforts (perceived state of implementation) in Northeast Iowa. The survey and interview protocol used the four broad categories and the 24 subcategories of transformation identified by superintendents in a 1993 survey conducted by the Keystone AEA.

Superintendents were chosen because as chief executive and operating officer of the school district they have a broad perspective on what is going on in the entire district that would not be available to other personnel. They are the individuals held accountable for the district operation.

I utilized a qualitative approach to provide a descriptive narrative that would be useful to practicing school administrators. This process has given me the opportunity to gain a broad understanding and

personal insight into the perceived state of school reform in Northeast Iowa.

I reviewed, analyzed, and recorded the data derived from the written surveys and the 10 on-site interviews. The resulting narratives provide a summarized compilation of the superintendents' perceived state of school reform in the 22 responding districts.

## Conclusions

### General Conclusions

1. The most significant individual in the implementation of the various school reforms in Northeast Iowa is the superintendent. This is contrary to what is suggested by much of the nationally circulated literature that cites the building principal as the major innovator driving reform. The superintendent has control of the financial and human resources that are available and with small exception was the person responsible for introducing the specific activities being cited in the survey responses and in the on-site interviews.

2. The Area Education Agency is the single unit that surfaces as an external force in the drive to implement school reform activities in Northeast Iowa. All superintendents rely on the expertise and assistance from the AEA in one form or another. They view the AEA as a helping agency, not a regulatory agency and thus do not feel threatened by the consultants providing assistance to their districts. They indicate that they would not view consultants from the Department of Education in the same light.

3. District superintendents seeking to implement various reform initiatives need only look as far as their neighbors in Iowa. With the relatively homogeneous population of Iowa, activities in Northeast Iowa are just as applicable in Southeast Iowa. Change is the one constant that schools can depend on. There will be change and the challenge is to manage the change in a fashion beneficial to children.

### Reform Initiatives

#### 1. Areas being addressed by 100% of respondents

All 22 responding superintendents report the implementation of Tech-Prep/School-to-Work curriculums as the major structural change in their school's curricula. Progress of implementation varies greatly from district to district. It is clear that the Keystone AEA and the Northeast Iowa Community College have provided significant leadership, resources, and the motivation for local districts in implementing Tech-Prep/School-to-Work. The AEA is clearly the most significant and influential collaborating agency in implementing this initiative.

All the responding superintendents report collaborating with the Keystone AEA and Northeast Iowa Community College. The Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative is common to all the districts. The Keystone AEA Phase III school improvement consortium is a close second in the area of collaboration. The superintendents note that without the AEA support and assistance such initiatives would not be happening.

All the responding superintendents perceive the professional development of teachers as being addressed. The leadership provided by the Keystone AEA with Phase III funding are by far the most significant factors cited in the provision of professional development activities



for teachers. Most cite that they could not provide the current level of service without the AEA.

2. Areas being addressed by a solid majority of respondents

Administrator and board development are being pursued in a solid majority of the schools. Finances generally govern the degree of implementation in this area. Board development is often limited to occasional usage of the ABLE program sponsored by the Iowa Association of School Boards. The ABLE program is increasingly being perceived as encouraging micro management by boards and superintendents are becoming less likely to encourage board members to attend. One Iowa State University professor is a very significant presence in the area of school board development activities.

Emphasis on the thinking process is being addressed by a solid majority of responding districts, commonly through the integration of curricula involving higher order thinking skills that are a part of the 280.12/280.18 process.

A solid majority of superintendents perceive their district is pursuing innovation in the use of time. Block scheduling is the single most cited innovation, either as being implemented or being studied. Innovative calendars are also being implemented or are being studied. Master contracts affect how many calendars must be structured.

A solid majority of the districts are pursuing an innovative approach to curriculum. This is most often in partnership with the Keystone AEA and involves a team approach to writing curriculum. Again the importance of the AEA participation is viewed as the key factor.

A solid majority of the districts are using non-traditional decision making models, primarily through the adoption of school-based decision making models (SBDM). Increased participation of teachers is common to all of those reporting.

Learning as lifelong process is being promoted by most districts, but more often visible as a philosophic commitment to the concept rather than evidence of specific activities. Many perceive the implementation of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative as key to promoting this concept.

3. Areas being addressed by a significant majority of respondents

Teacher planning for instruction is being addressed in a significant majority of the districts. Statutory requirements for days of attendance and time requirements with financial constraints appear to limit this initiative.

Use of space is being addressed in a significant majority of districts; the superintendents cite new construction and the addition of ICN rooms most commonly. Finances are most often cited as reason for not pursuing this initiative.

A significant majority of the superintendents see district direction and goal setting being addressed, generally through participation with the Keystone AEA in the school improvement consortium. Again the Keystone Phase III school improvement consortium is perceived as a major factor for most districts.

4. Areas being addressed by a slight majority of respondents

The role of the teacher is perceived as being addressed by a slight majority of the responding superintendents. No common theme

stands out, but the implementation of the Tech-Prep/School-to-Work initiative and the implementation of school-based decision making models are cited frequently.

A slight majority of responding superintendents perceive that their districts are pursuing initiatives involving classroom management. The Iowa Behavioral Initiative, a program from Drake University called Teaching Responsible Behavior, and the Dubuque Management System are cited as specifics.

A slight majority reports their districts are pursuing initiatives involving the development of student outcomes, generally through the 280.12/280.18 process. The Keystone AEA sponsored School improvement consortium is a major, but not universal factor for those reporting. Previous public reaction to outcome-based education has significantly slowed the development of student outcomes.

Some experiential learning activities are being integrated by a slight majority of the responding districts. International travel is a significant activity in experiential learning and is also cited by superintendents in promoting the provision of an international perspective and the embracing of pluralism.

Teaming among teachers is perceived as being implemented in a slight majority of the responding districts. The upper elementary and the middle school grades are the most active in implementing this strand.

A slight majority of the superintendents report their districts are addressing school entry and graduation policies. Graduation is most

commonly being changed through the mandating of more credits for graduation. This is not a major change area.

5. Areas being addressed by a minority of respondents

Changes involving the Structure of Learning are being pursued in a minority of districts. Those reporting implementation are using some form of multi-age grouping of students, generally at the elementary school level.

Staff assignments are being addressed by slightly over a third of the responding districts. Generally the changes are coming about through such initiatives as block scheduling or increased teaming among teachers.

Promoting the provision of an international perspective and the embracing of pluralism is also being addressed in a minority of districts.

### Recommendations

1. All areas of the state need to be surveyed so a statewide source is available to provide a comprehensive data base that can be accessed by all schools.

2. Educators, other than superintendents, must be surveyed. Principals and teachers would bring a different perspective to such a survey. My study examines only the perceptions of superintendents. What the superintendent reports is merely their beliefs. By surveying those others, researchers would develop a clearer picture of the state of reform in a given district.

3. Parents and Board members, as lay leaders, should also be surveyed; there is general perception among superintendents that parents, particularly, are not aware of the reforms taking place.

### Epilogue

There still exists a need for the rest of the State of Iowa to be surveyed. This is a task for several researchers, as the time necessary to compile such a study would be monumental for any one person, especially a working superintendent.

Because of the speed with which change is now occurring in Iowa schools it is recommended that any similar studies be commenced within three to five years to provide continuity.

The intent of this study was to provide a summary, a "snapshot" of school change efforts in one AEA that might be of use for both lay and professional educators. The narrative I used allows for the practitioner to gain some insight into the various initiatives being pursued. The data are sufficiently identifiable so that anyone desiring more information should be able to contact the various districts for detailed information on a particular initiative.

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## APPENDIX A

### State Initiatives

#### State of Iowa Educational Reform Initiatives

- Iowa's students need to become responsible and productive citizens in an increasingly interdependent world.
- All levels of Iowa's educational system must reflect a commitment to enabling students to reach their full potential.
- Higher student expectations should emphasize academics and the application of that knowledge and abilities in problem-solving, decision making, and work place readiness.
- Local schools, school districts, and community colleges must be driven by a shared direction reached with the informed involvement of students, educators, parents/families, business and labor, and other community members.
- Schools must be lifelong learning communities where educational staff have been provided quality preparation; effective, relevant professional development; and opportunities for participation in decision making.
- Parents and families must be active partners in the education of their children.
- Local schools, school districts, and community colleges have the primary responsibility for student achievement and will be free to use different, locally identified, and selected methods for helping all students achieve at high levels and for assessing the extent to which students demonstrate competence.
- The role of the state is to assure that the basic educational welfare of students is protected, to provide support to the local schools in their efforts to improve on system wide student achievement.
- All students in Iowa schools will have equal opportunity to participate in school programs and activities regardless of race, religion, national origin, sex, or disability (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 2, 3).

**GOAL A:** To increase the level of learning and achievement of all students to their maximum potential. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, p. 3)

- **Issue: Identification and Assessment of What Learners Should Know and be Able to Do.**

- **Elementary/Secondary Objectives**

Objective 1: Expectations--Each School Or School District Will Develop, Through Informed Dialogue With Its Community, A Clear Set Of Learning Expectations For Students In Their District And Standards For Student Performance.

- Objective 2: Assessment--All Schools And School Districts Will Use A Variety Of Assessment Methods To Determine Student Progress On Performance Standards.

- Objective 3: Equal Educational Opportunity--Educational Programs And Policies Will Promote Equal Opportunity For Involvement And Success For All Members Of A Diverse Student Population.

- Objective 4: Tech Prep/Associate Degree--Iowa Will Insure That High School Students Will Have The Opportunity To Participate In A Strong Academic And Technical Program Which Will Prepare Them To Continue Their Technical Education At A Two Year College To Acquire An Associate Degree, Enter Full-Time Employment In Their Chosen Field, Or Pursue A Bachelor's Degree At A Four Year College. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 3-7)

Objectives 5-7 are omitted here as they are strictly for community colleges.

**GOAL B: To enhance educator's development and renewal in order to increase opportunities of all students for productive life long learning. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, p 10)**

- **Issue: Teaching and Learning Processes Designed to Meet Student Needs.**

- **Elementary/Secondary Objectives**

- Objective 8: Professional Development--Iowa Educators Will Be Provided Time And Resources For Continuing Professional Development To Include Innovative Research-Based Teaching Methods To Better Meet The Needs Of All Students.

- Objective 9: Educator Preparation--Preparation And Licensure Of Educators Will Be Based On The Skills And Knowledge Needed Of Them In An Increasingly Interdependent World.

- Objective 10: Iowa's Educational Workforce--The Department Of Education Will Implement Effective Strategies To Recruit And Retain A Culturally Diverse Group Of Candidates To Become Teachers, Counselors And Administrators.

- Objective 11: Special Education--Local School Districts Will Support Collaboration And Cooperation Among Staff Members That Provides Innovative And Flexible Special Education Services That Result In Improved Student Learning And Adjustment.
- Objective 12: Gifted Education--Local Schools And School Districts Will Adopt And Support Appropriate Models To Address The Specific Abilities And Needs Of Gifted And Talented Students.
- Objective 13: Personalized Instruction--Schools Will Adopt Instructional Models And Methods That Create Increasing Opportunities For Students To Receive Instruction Based On Their Unique Needs.
- Objective 14: Early Childhood Education--Early Childhood Educational Opportunities Will Be Available To Meet The Needs Of All Iowa Children And Their Families Through A Coordinated Early Childhood Delivery System. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 10-16)

Objectives 15 and 16 are omitted here as they are strictly for community colleges.

**GOAL C:** To transform the education System at the building, district, area, and state levels to support the teaching and learning process. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, p. 18.)

- **Issue:** Enhancing Organizational Support And Conditions For Teaching Learning And Innovation.

#### Elementary/Secondary Objectives

- Objective 17: Supporting Innovation--School Boards And Professional Educators Will Be Accountable For Providing Active Organizational Support For Innovations In Teaching And Learning.
- Objective 18: Regulatory Flexibility--Iowa's Education System Will Minimize Regulatory Barriers While Maintaining Accountability
- Objective 19: Workforce Development--The Department Will Provide Leadership To Elementary/Secondary Education And The Community Colleges In The Design And Implementation Of A Workforce Development System That Will Improve The Quality Of Life Of Citizens And The State's Position In The Global Marketplace. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 18-21)

Objectives 20 and 21 are omitted here as they are strictly for community colleges

- **Issue:** School--Family--Community partnerships/Collaboration
- Objective 22: Local Collaboration And Resource Coordination--School Boards will Provide Leadership; Adopt Policies; And Establish

Partnerships Among Schools, Parents, Families And The Community Designed To Increase Student Achievement. School boards Will Coordinate With Other Public And Private Entities To Allocate Resources To Increase Opportunities To Learn.

- Objective 23: Cooperative Services--School And Community Agencies Will Work Collaboratively With Families To Develop And Deliver Services To Meet The Needs Of All Students.
- Objective 24: Collaboration--Community Colleges Will Work In Partnership With Elementary/Secondary Districts, Build Upon Existing Partnerships' Establish New Collaborative Efforts Among All Education Sectors, State And Federal Agencies, Employers, Employees, And Communities In Order To Improve The Ability Of The Educational System To Meet The Needs Of The State.
- **Issue: Technology Management**
- Objective 26: Technology-Leadership--The Department Of Education Will Take A Leadership Role By Developing And Communicating A Compelling Vision For Using Technology To Transform The Teaching And Learning Process, By Facilitating The Acquisition Of Technologies And Providing Appropriate Staff Development.
- Objective 26: ICN Access--All Iowa Schools And Community Colleges Will Have Direct Access To The Iowa Communications Network. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 22-28)

**GOAL D: To provide leadership to improve Iowa education through systematic planning and quality assurance.** (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, p. 29)

- **Issue: Adequate And Timely Information For Local And State Decision Making**
- **Elementary/Secondary Objectives**
- Objective 27: Annual Reports--The Department Of Education Will Identify And Annual Report On The State Level Indicators Of Student Progress.
- Objective 28: Progress Reports--Local School Officials Will Provide Constituents With The Indicators Needed To Determine Student Progress Toward Locally Identified Performance Standards.
- Objective 29: Statewide Clearinghouse--The Department Of Education Will Establish A Clearing House Which Will Make Available To Iowa's Educational Communities Information Regarding Instructional Programs, Statistics, Research And Practices.
- Objective 30: Public Awareness And Support--Public Understanding Of The Challenges Facing Our Student In The Future And Support For The

State's Education System Will Be Developed Through A Planned Communication Program.

- Objective 31: Management Information System--The State Will Provide Leadership In Development Of A State-Wide Management Information System That Will Provide Access To Information For Planning, Management, Decision Making, An Policy Development. (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 28-34)

Objective 32 is omitted here as it is strictly for community colleges

- **Issue: Adequate Resources**

- **Elementary/Secondary Objectives**

- Objective 33: Adequate Funding--The Department Of Education Will Work Collaboratively With The Educational Institutions, Organizations And Associations To Secure Adequate New Funding For Iowa Schools Commensurate With The State's Ability To Pay.
- Objective 34: Compensation And Retirement Models--The Department Of Education Will Provide Local School Boards With Models For Compensating Educators Commensurate With Responsibilities And Levels Of Training. The Current Retirement System (IPERS) Should Be Improved To Attract And Keep Quality Educational Personnel.
- Objective 35: Infrastructure--To Deal With Deteriorating Buildings And Renovation Needs The Current Bond Issue Approval Rate Should Be Changed To A Simple Majority And A State Funding Resource Will Be Established To Integrate With Local Funding (Bond Issue). (Iowa Department of Education, 1994, pp. 34-35.)

Objective 36 is omitted here as it is strictly for community colleges.

## APPENDIX B

### Keystone AEA Initiatives

#### Keystone AEA School Reform Initiatives

##### TRANSFORMATION -- LEARNING

- Learning -- Structure Of Learning (Multi-Age Grouping).
- Learning -- Curriculum.
- Learning -- Student Outcomes.
- Learning -- Emphasis On Thinking Process.
- Learning -- Incorporation of Experiential Learning.
- Learning -- International Perspective; Embracing Pluralism.
- Learning -- Recognition Of Learning As Lifelong.

##### TRANSFORMATION --TEACHING

- Teaching -- Teaming Among Teachers.
- Teaching -- Teacher Planning For Instruction.
- Teaching -- Role of the Teacher.
- Teaching -- Classroom Management
- Teaching -- Student Evaluation.
- Teaching -- Professional Development.

##### TRANSFORMATION -- ORGANIZATION

- Organization -- Inter- and Intra-Agency Collaboration.
- Organization -- School Entry And Graduation Policies.
- Organization -- Use of Space In Buildings.
- Organization -- Use Of Time (Day, Week, Calendar).

- Organization -- District Approach To Curriculum.

#### TRANSFORMATION -- MANAGEMENT

- Management -- Approach To Decision Making.
- Management -- Role of Superintendent and Principals.
- Management -- Staff Assignments.
- Management -- District Direction.
- Management -- District Goals.
- Management -- Professional Development for Administrators and Board.

(Holland, 1993b)



# North-Linn Community School District

3033 Lynx Drive  
 Coggon, Iowa 52218  
 (319) 224-3291  
 FAX (319) 224-3727

**P. Allen Whitlatch, Superintendent**

*Ragene Meade, Business Manager*

**John Mathre, Elementary Principal**

435-2396 COGGON ELEMENTARY CENTER

448-4325 WALKER ELEMENTARY CENTER

**John Brooke, Secondary Principal**

224-3411 MIDDLE SCHOOL

224-3291 SENIOR HIGH

January 5, 1996

<L Name> ,SUPERINTENDENT

IA <Zip>

Dear <Salutation>:

I am in the process of writing a doctoral dissertation at Drake University. I am studying the school reform movement that has come about since the publication of such documents as, *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 and *America 2000* in 1991, (now *Goals 2000*).

Probably all school districts have responded in some fashion to the call for reform by these documents, politicians, the media and lay and professional educational leaders. As an educator in northeast Iowa I am very interested in which reform initiatives are being pursued. For the purposes of my study I have selected the schools in the Keystone AEA. I believe the results of this study, which I plan to share with all Iowa schools, will provide Iowa Superintendents with information on the perceived state of school reform that will assist them in their school districts.

I have enclosed a survey that asks you to respond yes or no to a series of questions on previously identified strands. If you mark yes, please give a brief description of your activity. I will also be conducting on site interviews at nine schools in the AEA.

I would be most appreciative of your timely response to my survey. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Al Whitlatch

**APPENDIX D**  
**Informed Consent Form**

I hereby give consent for Al Whitlatch to perform the following procedures:

1. Audio tape our interview regarding superintendent perceptions on school reform.
2. Listen to and analyze the taped session.

I understand that the tapes are to be kept for research purposes only. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without questions being asked. Therefore I voluntarily consent to the above procedures.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

## Survey

*In 1993 the Keystone AEA identified twenty-four school transformation strands that were being actively pursued by schools in Area I. Those strands are listed below. Of course not all schools are pursuing the same initiatives. it is important, however, to identify which are being pursued and to what degree if possible so other schools can share in the successes and avoid possible dead ends in the process.*

If your district is pursuing activities that you believe fall under a given strand, please check yes and give a brief explanation of the activity. If you do not perceive that your district is working on this strand just check no.

Your District Name \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to have a  
summary of this study? \_\_\_\_\_

Years Experience in your district \_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSFORMATION of LEARNING**

The following strands were identified under the label of transformation of learning, please check whether this strand is being pursued in your district and if so please give a short example of what is being done.

Yes No

☐ ☐ 1. Structure Of Learning (Multi-Age Grouping).

☐ ☐ 2. Curriculum Changes (Tech Prep, School To Work Etc.)

☐ ☐ 3. Student Outcomes. (Student Progress Based On Identified Outcomes)

☐ ☐ 4. Emphasis On Thinking Process.(Development Of Higher Order Thinking Skills)

☐ ☐ 5. Incorporation Of Experiential Learning.(Providing Students Cultural Activities Not Usually Available In The Resident District)

☐ ☐ 6. International Perspective; Embracing Pluralism.

☐ ☐ 7. Recognition Of Learning As A Lifelong Process

The following strands were identified under the label of transformation of teaching, please check whether this strand is being pursued in your district and if so please give a short example of what is being done.

## TRANSFORMATION --TEACHING

Yes    No

- ☐ ☐ 8. Teaming Among Teachers.
- ☐ ☐ 9. Teacher Planning For Instruction.
- ☐ ☐ 10. Role of the Teacher.
- ☐ ☐ 11. Classroom Management
- ☐ ☐ 12. Student Evaluation.
- ☐ ☐ 13. Professional Development (of teachers)

## TRANSFORMATION of ORGANIZATION

The following strands were identified under the label of transformation of the Organization, please check whether this strand is being pursued in your district and if so please give a short example of what is being done.

Yes    No

- ☐ ☐ 14. Inter- Agency and Intra-Agency Collaboration.
- ☐ ☐ 15. School Entry And Graduation Policies.
- ☐ ☐ 16. Use of Space In Buildings.
- ☐ ☐ 17. Use Of Time (Day, Week, Calendar).
- ☐ ☐ 18. District Approach To Curriculum.

## TRANSFORMATION -- MANAGEMENT

The following strands were identified under the label of transformation of management, please check whether this strand is being pursued in your district and if so please give a short example of what is being done.

Yes      No

☐    ☐ 19. Approach To Decision Making.

☐    ☐ 20. Role of Superintendent and Principals.

☐    ☐ 21. Staff Assignments.

☐    ☐ 22. District Direction.

☐    ☐ 23. District Goals.

☐    ☐ 24. Professional Development for Administrators and Board.

# APPENDIX F

## Chart of Survey Results

DISTRICT	Structure of Learning	Curriculum Changes	Student Outcomes	Emphasis on Thinking	Experiential Learning	International Incorporation	Lifelong Learning	Teaming Among Teachers	Teacher planning for Instruction	Role of the Teacher	Classroom Management	Student Evaluation	Professional Development of teachers
ALLAMAKEE		X	X	X			X				X	X	X
CENTRAL ELKADER		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
DECORAH		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
EASTERN ALLAMAKEE		X			X		X		X				X
EDGEWOOD-COLESBURG		X	X	X			X		X			X	X
FREDERICKSBURG	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X
GARNAVILLO		X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
GUTTENBERG		X			X							X	X
HOWARD-WINNESHIEK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MAQUOKETA VALLEY		X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X
MFL MAR MAC	X	X			X			X	X	X		X	X
NORTH FAYETTE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
NORTH WINNESHIEK	X	X		X			X	X	X		X	X	X
OE'WEIN	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X
POSTVILLE	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
RICEVILLE		X	X	X			X		X		X	X	X
SOUTH WINNESHIEK		X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X
STARMONT	X	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X
TURKEY VALLEY		X		X			X	X				X	X
WEST CENTRAL		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X
WEST DELAWARE		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
WESTERN DUBUQUE	X	X		X	X		X	X			X	X	X
Active	9	22	14	16	13	7	20	14	16	12	12	20	22
Non Active	13	0	8	6	9	15	2	8	6	10	10	2	0

Inter and Intra Agency Collaboration  
 School Entry and Graduation Policies  
 Use of Space in Buildings  
 Use of Time

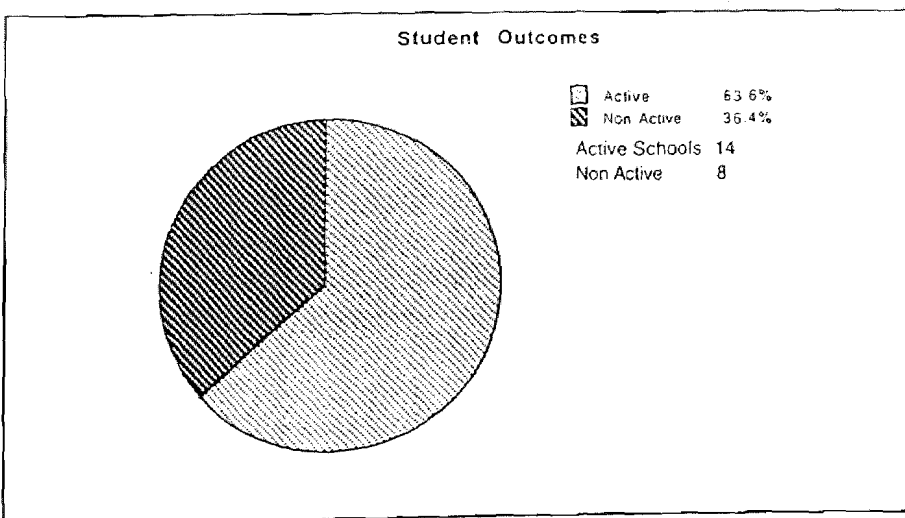
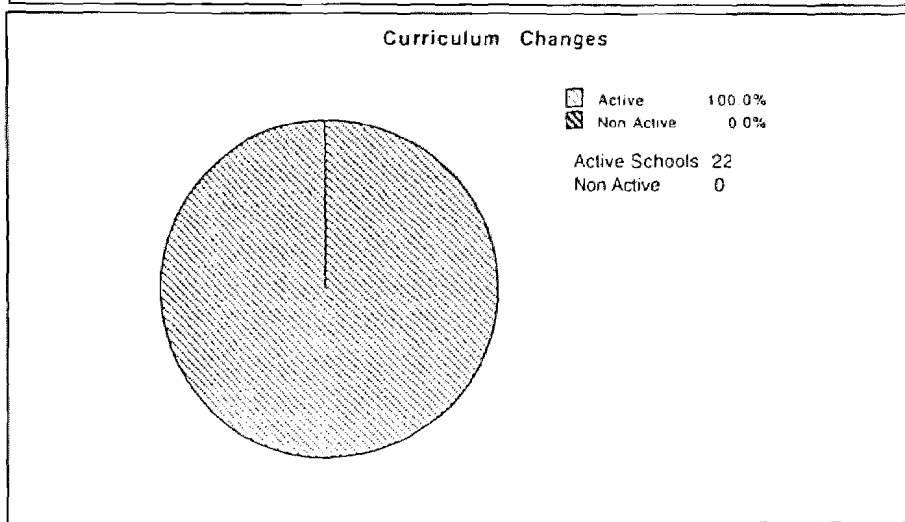
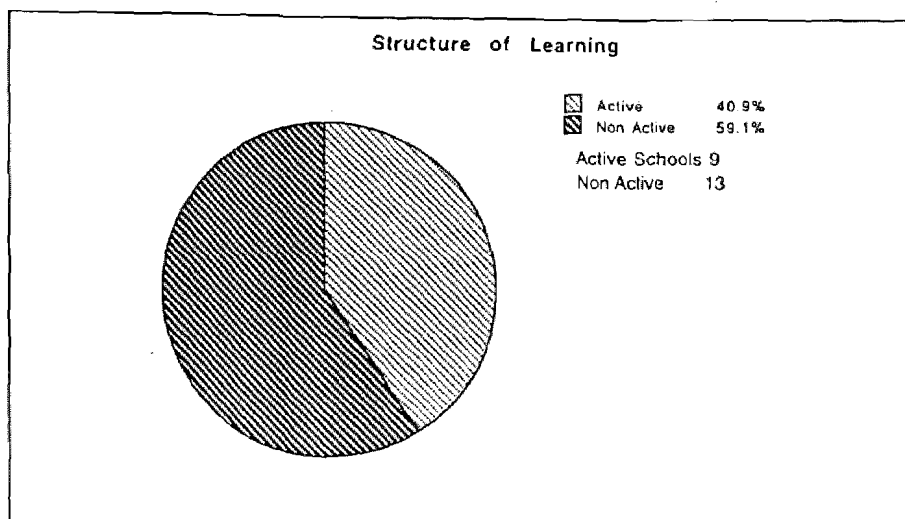
District Approach to Curriculum  
 Approach to Decision Making  
 Role of Supt & Principals  
 Staff Assignments  
 District Direction  
 District Goals

Professional Development for Admin & Board

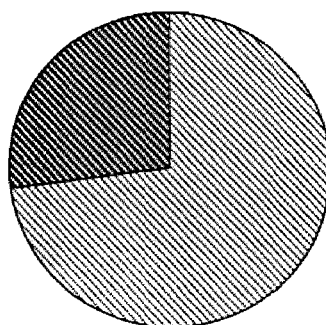
DISTRICT													
ALLAMAKEE	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x		
CENTRAL ELKADER	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		
DECORAH	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
EASTERN ALLAMAKEE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x			
EDGEWOOD-COLESBURG	x					x					x		
FREDERICKSBURG	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
GARNAVILLO	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
GUTTENBERG	x			x	x				x	x			
HOWARD-WINNESHIEK	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
MAQUOKETA VALLEY	x	x	x			x	x		x	x			
MFL MAR MAC	x		x	x		x		x			x		
NORTH FAYETTE	x			x	x		x			x	x		
NORTH WINNESHIEK	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x			
OELWEIN	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x			
POSTVILLE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
RICEVILLE	x		x	x		x	x		x	x	x		
SOUTH WINNESHIEK	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
STARMONT	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x		
TURKEY VALLEY	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x		
WEST CENTRAL				x	x	x	x		x		x		
WEST DELAWARE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
WESTERN DUBUQUE	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Active	22	13	14	16	17	20	19	8	18	19	17		
Non Active	0	9	8	6	5	2	3	14	4	3	5		

## APPENDIX G

## Graphs

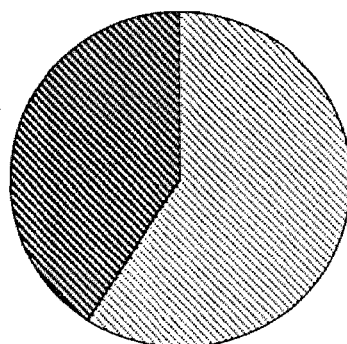




**Emphasis on Thinking**

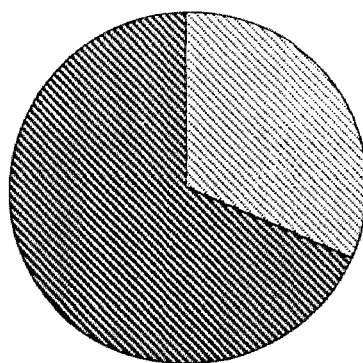
Active 72.7%  
Non Active 27.3%

Active Schools 16  
Non Active 6

**Experiential Learning**

Active 59.1%  
Non Active 40.9%

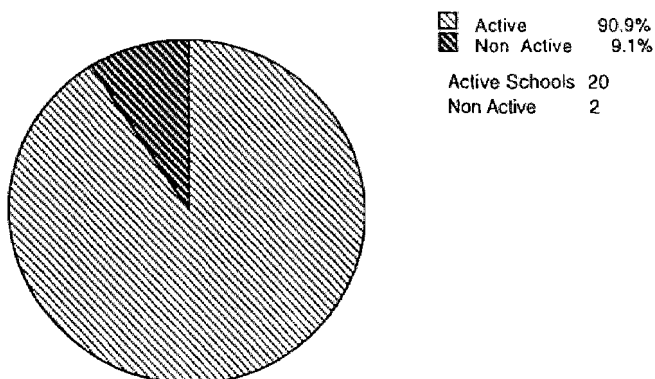
Active Schools 13  
Non Active 9

**International Perspective**

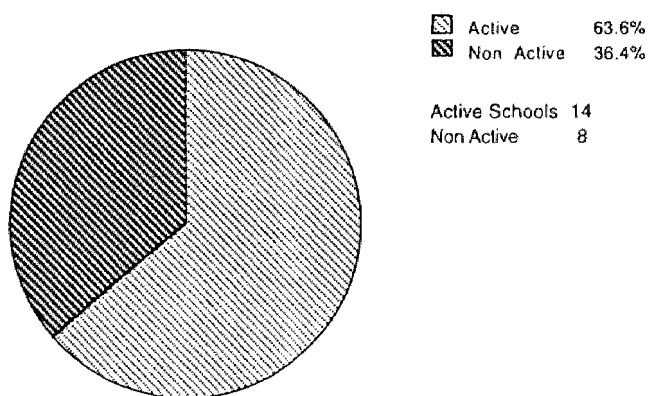
Active 31.8%  
Non Active 68.2%

Active Schools 7  
Non Active 15

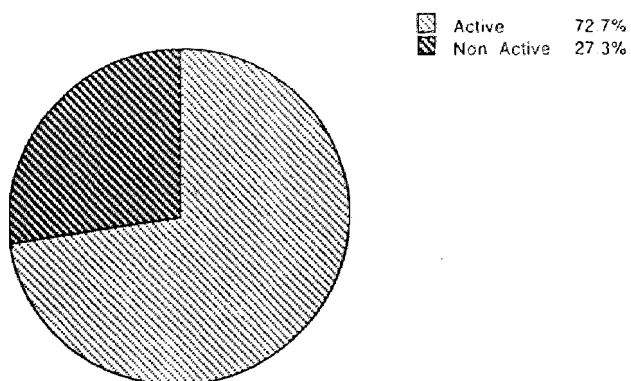
Lifelong Learning Process



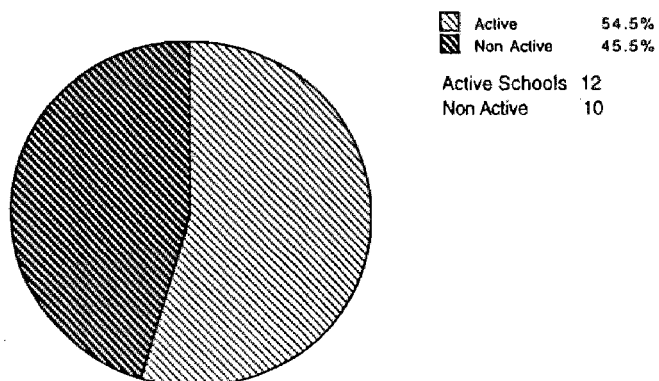
Teaming Among Teachers



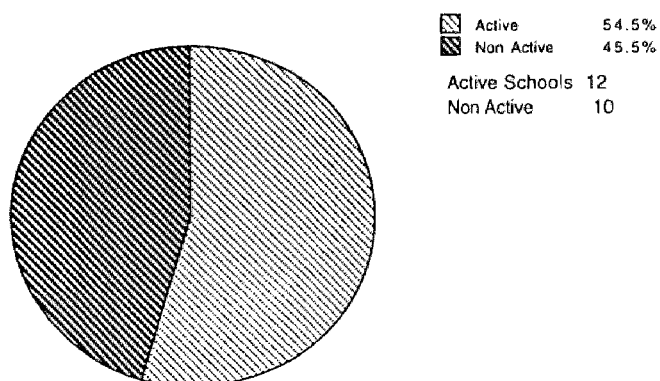
Teacher Planning



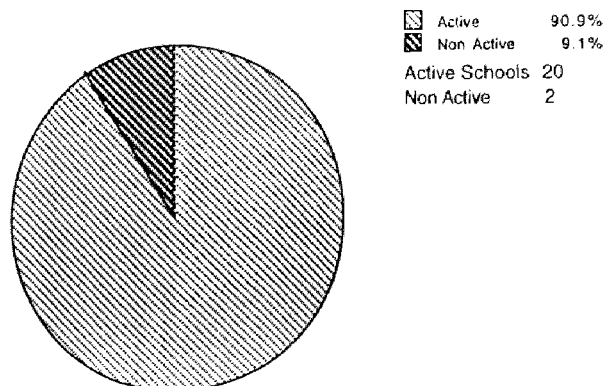
Role of the Teacher



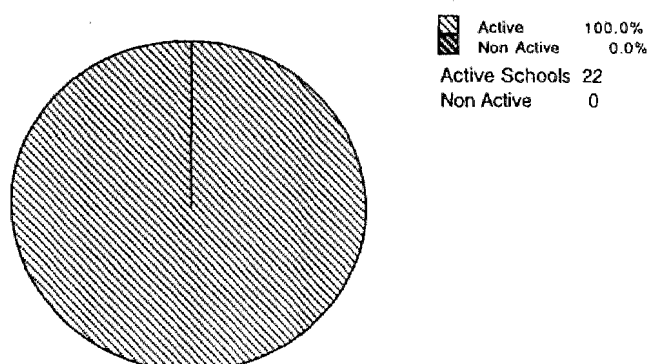
Classroom Management



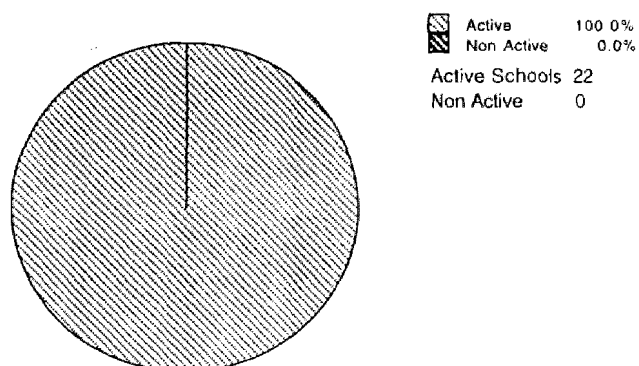
Student Evaluation



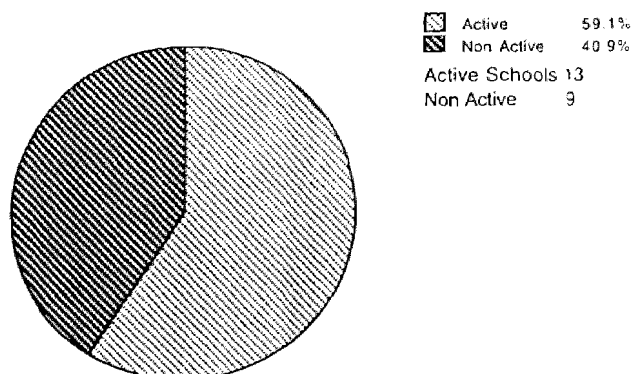
### Professional Development of Teachers



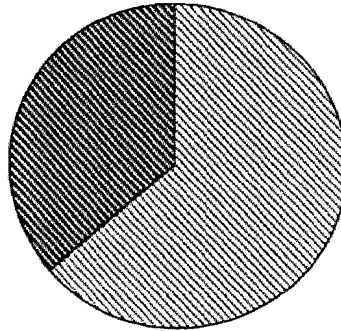
### Agency Collaboration



### Entry/Graduation Policies

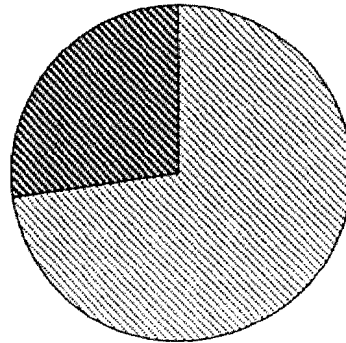


Use of Space



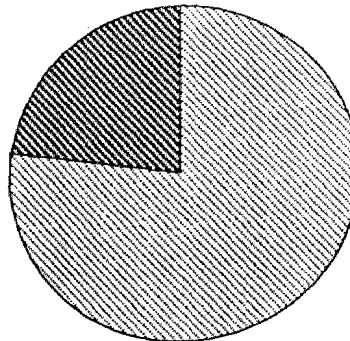
Active 63.6%  
Non Active 36.4%  
Active School 14  
Non Active 8

Use of Time



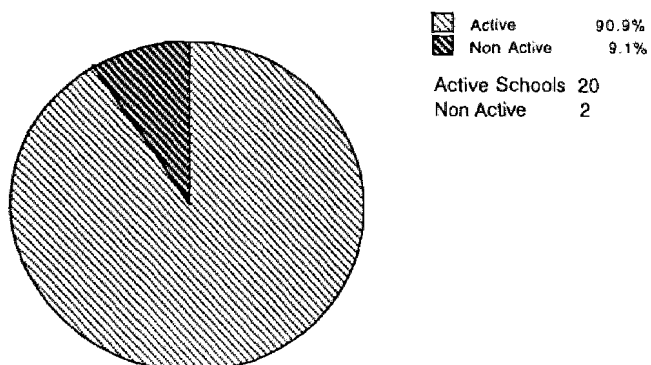
Active 72.7%  
Non Active 27.3%  
Active Schools 16  
Non Active 6

District Approach to Curriculum

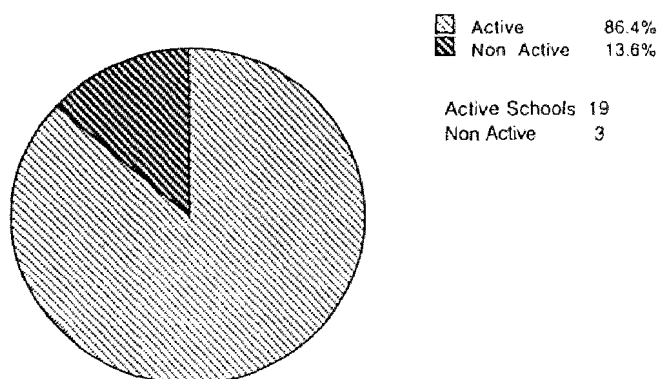


Active 77.3%  
Non Active 22.7%  
Active Schools 17  
Non Active 5

## Approach to Decision Making



## Role of Supt. &amp; Principal



## Staff Assignments

